

Important Information re Oireachtas Rince na hEireann

& Oireachtas Rince na Cruinne 2020

At the meeting of An Coimisiún le Rince Gaelacha on Friday, 30th October, a long discussion took place regarding the impact that Covid-19 has inflicted on major events throughout the World. We have been tirelessly updating plans as to how our 2021 flagship events could proceed given all possible scenarios. At the same time, CLRG fully recognises the struggles that dancers and teachers are facing on a daily basis, and the very fine balance that must be reached between reality and providing hope to the dancing community.

Current Covid-19 situation in Ireland

Ireland is at Level 5 restrictions and these are expected to remain effective for a minimum of six weeks. Current restrictions include:-

- Organised indoor gatherings, including events in theatres, should not take place.
- Hotels, guesthouses and B&Bs may remain open but only to support the provision of essential services.
- Restaurants and cafes can only provide take-away services.
- Public Transport will operate at 25% capacity for those providing essential services only.
- Residents can only travel within a 5km radius of home for specific purposes such as exercise or food shopping.
- International travel restrictions apply, including 14 days isolation on entering the country.
- Over 70's and medically vulnerable individuals are strongly advised to remain at home.

Whilst it is CLRG's opinion that there may be some easing of restrictions prior to Christmas, with the anticipated increase in social and family interactions over the holiday season, there will be most likely a return to high level restrictions in middle to late January. It is reasonable to expect a further return to Level 5 could last for a further 6-8 weeks.

Oireachtas Rince na hEireann 2021

With these expected restrictions and indeed to prioritise the health, safety and wellbeing of the dancing community, CLRG has no option other than to cancel Oireachtas Rince na hEireann 2021 with immediate effect. The next Oireachtas will take place in February 2022 in Killarney. Cancelling at this time provides some certainty to both teachers and dancers and will remove the burden of entry and fee collection scheduled in the near future.

Oireachtas Rince na Cruinne 2021

These championships were due to start just a short 5 weeks after the All Ireland Championships had concluded. It is highly likely that there will be some level of Covid-19 restrictions still in place that would seriously impact on the possibility, and indeed the authenticity and viability of, Oireachtas Rince na Cruinne taking place as scheduled. Whilst country wide restrictions may be slightly reduced from the present situation, it is anticipated that International travel may still be severely curtailed with self-isolation periods still being applicable for overseas visitors. It is totally unfair and unreasonable to expect any dancer to isolate for anything up to 14 days prior to competing, incurring large accommodation, food and additional expenditure on their families. Moreover, our dancing community cannot be seen to encourage or be complicit in the reintroduction or unnecessary spread of Covid-19. We have a clear moral and ethical duty to take all adequate measures to protect and safeguard each other and indeed the general population of Ireland.

Therefore, after much deliberation and soul searching, it is with regret to announce that An Coimisiún has accepted that Oireachtas Rince na Cruinne 2021 cannot take place on the original dates.

CLRG is critically aware of the impact that such devastating news will have on the dancing community at this time, especially being so close to Regional Qualifying events. It is therefore actively pursuing the possibility of rescheduling Oireachtas Rince na Cruinne to 25th July though 2nd August 2021 when the venue has full availability and Covid-19 restrictions may have hopefully reduced. This is the only window of opportunity that is open to us at this venue. Dates later in the year are just not possible due to either the venue being already booked or clashes with other already contracted major events elsewhere in the World.

CLRG has agreed that a final decision regarding a 2021 Worlds proceeding or not, will be made by 1st March 2021, when the Covid-19 situation will be clearer and attendees would still have nearly 5 months to plan accordingly.

We hope that everyone can understand why these major decisions have been taken at this time and have some patience and empathy with members as they redouble their efforts to provide a suitable and safe environment for a return to the wonderful art form that is Irish Dancing.