

GVC Road Racing Secretary Report.

I'd like to start this report with some positive highlights, and thank each and every person who has volunteered to marshal this season. Without club members undertaking volunteering duties we simply would not be able to race on the road. Gary especially, has ensured that all 20 of the clubs signs have been distributed and collected at each road event! The hill climb series was very well supported by both Senior and Under 16 members, and it was great to see so many of the Academy and Flyers members taking on the opportunity to race on the closed roads and be so competitive, and as always the PVK Easter Festival was well supported by both club and non club members and we were very grateful to Wheels and Co for their sponsorship.

At the AGM last year we heard from Steve Sharman that the feedback project undertaken on behalf of the GVC board indicated that the road race program had become very 'samey' with no new events, all starting early in the day and with no excitement to attract riders and that there were too many races. So, when it came time to plan the race calendar for the season this feedback was considered.

The planning process recognised that attendance at road events in the summer holidays were particularly poorly attended. Long road races, generally resulted in less interesting races which had turned into endurance events and that trying to hold a crit series in July/August resulted in all races being rained off and a series not being able to take place. And whilst it is recognised that all GVC road events are held early morning, except for hill climbs and track crits, holding races on open roads anytime later in the day would present a significant risk due to traffic volume.

So, with all this in mind a calendar was designed that consisted of less road events and shortened road races, weighted more towards the pre summer holidays period with enough run up to the island games to give riders the chance to peak in time for the games. The crit series was moved to May/June in the hope that it would be drier and the number of TT's was reduced.

As always, you cannot please all of the people all of the time and some of these decisions, that were based on member feedback, were questioned and resulted in the calendar that we ended up with.

There were other challenges around calendar planning as well, including an uplift in the number of events that Tri-club held pre-Island Games, which we couldn't clash with as the courses overlapped, planned Road Closures of L'ere Hill, Torteval Road and Port Soif Road. This all led to a very busy schedule in May to ensure we had the minimum number of events for the various series and championships.

The biggest issue this year has been the lack of marshals and particularly race organisers, not just for Road races but also crit series and TT's – it's fair to say, that if I hadn't stepped back from racing this year to cover the organiser duties then it's very likely that most road races would not have happened. There were calls for marshals for almost every race. Whilst I appreciate marshalling isn't the most fun thing to do, we need marshals, people volunteering

to marshal enables club members to race, it's particularly galling to see riders who have already raced and not volunteered, riding around the race circuit on race day watching the race. I find it particularly disrespectful to myself and other club members, that we give up our race and our Sunday mornings to try and put on a race for our club members and other club members selfishly decide that they are not going to reciprocate. Hopefully the new racing secretary won't decide to reduce the calendar even further for next year due to the difficulty in ensuring marshal duties are covered.

Crit Series – due to St Sampsons Douzaine deciding to replace the fencing at Delancey without telling us, the track was unavailable for the first few races of the series and we had to move to Victoria Avenue, this resulted in the series being reduce to 5 races.

Road Races – All races took place, albeit a couple had to be moved date due to road closures and there were a couple of course changes due to lack of marshals.

Time-Trials – First 10TT of the season had to take place on as shortened course due to road works at Fort Grey and the 50TT was changed to a 10TT due to lack of marshals and registered riders. The 10TTT was also cancelled due to forecasted bad weather that actually didn't materialise.

Hill Cimb Series – 4 events, all well attended, with 2 new courses being introduced, Rue Des Clercs in St Peters and Petites Vallees in Castel. Hopefully the series will continue next year due to its popularity and allowing the U12's to compete on closed roads. We now have a good selection of hills that can be rotated into the series to provide more variety.

PVK Easter Festival – this proved popular this year, although numbers were slightly down on previous years. The event consisted of a Road Crit, Hill Climb (on a new course), TT (on a new course) and Road Race – the new courses added a new dynamic to the event with OMG being used for the Hill Climb. Feed back on both courses was positive and I would encourage the use of the same courses next year to build on their popularity, the presentation at Wheels and Co was also a different end to the event, but worked really well and all riders honoured the spirit of the event.

Women's Series – This was introduced to try and encourage more women to race. Whilst the support was a little but lower than I hoped and not reflective of the numbers at the previous women's only race, this series is something the club should continue to offer in an effort to get more women racing in a less pressured and perceptually more welcoming environment, which eventually lead to more women taking part in the regular season. I would be willing to organise this series again in 2026.

Corporate series - although this was floated at the start of the year, lack of time, busy calendar and challenges around track availability meant it didn't happen.

After nearly 15 years of being involved in the club at committee and board level, this year has been the point where its time to take a rest and actually get back to enjoying riding my bike, without the stress of worrying about race organisation, making sure Sportmember is up to date, ensuring that there are enough marshals for an event, coordinating road closures,

putting together the various championships results, doing TT start lists, operating the timing system and making sure all the trophies are engraved.

As yet, no one else has indicated that they will be taking over the role of road racing secretary, but needless to say, I will not be staying on because no one else will do it. We are a club of over 140 senior members and it would be a pretty sad reflection on the membership if no one feels that it is their turn to take some responsibility for ensuring that the road side of the club can continue.

I do want to end of a positive note. The GVC is a fantastic club, with over 55 years of history, I've made some really good friends over the years, learnt a lot about myself, and have thoroughly enjoyed racing with you all despite some challenging times. Whilst I may be winding back what I do, I am still going to be racing and at races. There may be challenges to how the club carries on, but I am sure that everyone will rise to those challenges and make the future bright, this clubs presence, energy and sense of belonging have helped me through some dark times and given me hope for the future but the club's strength does not rest with one person but all our members.

Mark Smith – Road Coordinator