

SACC Meeting 20th March 2018 – Report from Rallies Committee

SACC Member clubs should note that Dave Weston has resigned from this committee for personal (work related) reasons. The committee appointment process is such that this does not create an immediate vacancy, nor does the committee constitution require a specific representative from Scotland. Having said that, the MSA have agreed to co-opt Fiona Moir of Highland Car Club on to the rallies committee for the remainder of 2018.

In the meantime, this report has been prepared based on the minutes of the two Rallies Committee meetings held since the last SACC meeting.

Rallies Committee 15 November 2017

Rallies Committee reviewed a summary document from the tracking provider, KwikTrak, and were shown a prototype dash console and testing box to demonstrate the different functions of the system. The dash console contained an “OK” button, an “SOS” flick-switch and a Red Flag light. The system uses GSM technology, with an enhancement system in place for areas of low GSM coverage. Tracking will cover all stage rallies not taking place on fixed venues, such as race circuits. Training for using the system will form part of its implementation. The MSA have committed to giving not less than three months notice of implementation.

Over 300 Safety Car Officials Licences having been issued. Over 10,000 people had completed the online Marshal Accreditation training and 6,731 had been issued a Rally Marshal Registration for 2017. The number of marshals attending training was raised as a concern and it was said that new ways of training needed to be looked into. Ian Davis felt that a culture change was needed and Marshals needed to aware that their priority was the safety of spectators and themselves, but further thought should be reserved until after the Fatal Accident Inquiry Report was released.

Various regulation changes were discussed. These have since been put out for consultation and are thus not reported in this summary.

The Chairman noted that the Competitors signs on to the event to confirm that they have insurance in place, and the checking of this should not fall to the signing-on crews.

It was reported that the FIA were changing to the use of red flags, in place of yellow, and asked whether the MSA should also incorporate this change. Events outside the UK, including the Republic of Ireland, use yellow flags for a different reason, and so reverting to the use of red flags would make this clearer for everybody. Education is required for Competitors, as in most cases the colour red was understood to mean that they should stop. The Chairman ended the discussion by confirming that the regulations would be changed to red flags, with the report from the Fatal Accident Inquiry reviewed upon its release to ensure there were no further recommendations.

Ian Davis reported that the MSA Safety Director, Kate Adamson, wished each discipline to have their own version of the Stage Rally Safety Requirements document to expand upon the regulations within the MSA Yearbook. A version for Road Rallies, which was needed to cover events which included Special Tests, is under way.

Dave Weston had sent an email, which was appended to the Agenda, and mentioned concerns regarding the spectator control on Wales Rally GB. In his email, Dave stated that this was raised by SACC last year but the images released from the event showed that the same concerns still existed. Other event had expressed the same concerns. There was a discussion around the issue that did not reach a clear conclusion.

Committee heard that many Historic Competitors did not believe that they had a voice, and that the regulations were formed by the Historic Committee, which did not seem to have any Rally representatives.

Rallies Committee 23 January 2018

Rally tracking is to be the subject of a further review by the incoming MSA Chairman. There are still many unanswered questions from competitors and organisers regarding the system. The MSA want to provide the answers but this would only happen when the answers were available and real-world testing had been carried out.

The Chairman reported that the Sheriff had released his report following the Fatal Accident Inquiry, which had been very fair to the sport. There was praise for how the volunteers involved had presented themselves throughout the hearing. It was also noted that in both accidents, on the Snowman and Jim Clark Rallies, the processes in place had worked as they should.

The Chairman confirmed that some recommendations and considerations had been made within the report that work carried out by the RallyFuture programme since the accidents had been taken into account, but work would continue to ensure the sport was as safe as possible and no complacency should be allowed. In both accidents, the spectator dynamic had changed after the Stages had been approved to run, and how this was dealt with was the biggest challenge.

Regarding first aid kits and OK boards on Road Rallies, it was felt that this could be seen as a barrier to entry on smaller events. It was suggested that this should only be mandated for events which included Special Tests although some events are already mandating them in their supplementary regulations. On events in Europe, competitors are required to have two fluorescent jackets in the car and it would be a good idea to recommend the same in the UK. It was agreed that equipment such as a first aid kit, fluorescent jackets and torches should be recommended within the Yearbook and RRSR's.

The Chairman said that the change to red flags had been drafted, and the regulations were out for consultation until 28th March 2018. However, the utilisation of the flags needed to be discussed. Ian Davis reported that the use of the flags had been discussed by the Committee in 2013, but reviews (MESR/FAI) since has found some weaknesses within the regulations, particularly with regards to how a car within a Stage was instructed to cease competition in the event of an accident or spectator issues.

The tracking system would assist in such a situation, but the use of flags would continue in the meantime. Additionally, there was some confusion regarding when the flags should be used. Some organisers, Officials and Marshals believed that they were to be used on all Stages, at all Radio Points, to cease competition, and Ian suggested whether the regulations should be altered to match this. The Chairman added that the current regulations only required the flags to be used on Stages where there was a chance of a non-competing Rescue vehicle entering the Stage ahead of competing cars.

The current fear is that Marshals are using the flag incorrectly. The Committee agreed to a simplification and clarification of the use of the Red Flag, noting the recommendation of the FAI.

The Chairman confirmed that the MSA had issued guidance for the use of electric vehicles within motor sport events. A Competition Car Log Book has been issued to a Renault Zoe, which subsequently competed in a Single Venue Stage Rally at Three Sisters circuit. The FIA do not allow Marshals to attend to cars with over 60v power.

Peter Weall

(prepared from meeting minutes)