

Motor Sport on Public Roads



February 2014

Q&A

1. What are the benefits of changing this law?

- a. It is great news for local communities:
 - i) It devolves power from Westminster to Local Authorities
 - ii) Events can provide economic and social benefits for host communities
 - iii) It brings Britain in line with mainland Europe, the Republic of Ireland, Ulster (UK) and the Crown Dependencies of the Isle of Man and the Channel Islands.
- b. It is great news for the sport:
 - i) It makes the sport more accessible to the general population, supports grass roots motor sport and enables clubs to play a bigger role in their local community.
 - ii) It supports the world-leading UK motor sport industry that generates £9bn for the UK economy and employs 41,000 people in 4,300 companies.
 - iii) It provides an alternative option for event organisers, in addition to the current use of permanent venues, forests and private land.

2. What type of events are you talking about?

It is anticipated that the vast majority will be events that are classified as 'trials of speed'. These are typically Sprints or Hill Climbs during which a single car at a time sets their fastest time on a set course of a minimum of 200m in length.

There is also potential for Stage Rallies to be held on closed public roads (as with the existing Jim Clark Rally and the Mull Rally). Stage Rallies also feature single cars running on the course at timed intervals. A likely occurrence in Stage Rallying would be to join two relatively short lengths of forest track by a small section of public highway to create a viable stage section, or to hold a spectator stage in a local town centre.

3. And motor races like F1?

This proposed legislation is aimed at enabling domestic grassroots events rather than higher profile activities. However, it is true that the same legislation could also enable roads to be closed to host a motor race (ie multi-car start on the same track at the same time) such as an F1 Grand Prix. However, organising this level of event would entail significant infrastructure requirements, costs and disruption, making this an unlikely scenario, quite apart from the fact that Silverstone, the home of British motor racing, already has a long-term contract with Formula One.

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4. Is it safe to have competition on public roads?

Safety is the primary and overriding consideration in the organisation of any motor sport event. There are already similar events taking place in the UK quite safely under the control of the regulations of the two governing bodies (MSA and ACU). This proposal is for events to be allowed to use certain sections of closed public roads which would not be accessible to general traffic during the event itself. As with all existing events, the organisation and governance of the event would have to satisfy the very highest regulatory standards to ensure its safe and responsible running.

5. How would this impact on local communities?

The impact on local communities would be a positive one, bringing economic benefit, investment and tourism to areas, as well as excitement and civic pride among local people. The motor sport community already has great experience of running a number of similar and very successful events; organisers undertake an extensive planning process to minimise any inconvenience and disruption, which results in great support for the events among the local population. An important safeguard in this proposal is that it would only apply to local communities that want to host an event.

6. What about the emergency services?

The emergency services are always fully consulted as part of the planning process for any motor sport event. The MSA and ACU have extensive experience of working with the emergency services to plan safe and well run motor sport events and to ensure that the normal work of the emergency services is able to continue unaffected.

7. Why is this good for motor sport clubs?

Like most sports clubs, local motor clubs are run by volunteers who organise events for the enjoyment of their members. This legislation has the potential to enable local clubs to play a bigger role in their local community and for the sport to make a positive contribution to the local economy. It also increases opportunity for social engagement, involvement of young people in organised activities outside events and the creation of positive role models in society.

8. How much would all of this cost?

The proposed legislation should not create any additional burden on Local Authorities. It is anticipated that events would be self-funding and self-managing by local motor clubs working closely with the Local Authorities and emergency services. Indeed, the enhanced economic activity which would surround such events would be likely to bring benefits rather than costs to the Authority and local community.

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