

Chairman's Report to the March 2021 General Meeting of SAMSC

My report to the first meeting each year would normally herald the opening up of the new season across all disciplines but yet again I find myself writing this against the backdrop of no events. Since our last meeting, I feel it has been a case of two steps forward and one step (perhaps even two or three steps) back. In this report, there are a few things I want to cover.

Covid19 Update

Motorsport UK have announced that organised Permitted motorsport can resume in England with effect from 29 March, subject to local restrictions and in accordance with the Motorsport UK Restart Guidance available on their website. The announcement went on to say that "hopefully it won't be too much longer before we are announcing similarly positive updates in regard to the other 'locked down' nations, and we are in constant dialogue with the relevant sport agencies to establish those timelines as quickly as possible."

As I write this, the situation in Scotland is being revealed week by week. I have just listened to the regular Tuesday update to the Scottish Parliament hoping to hear some positive news but I was yet again frustrated. As best I can make out from the Strategic Framework published last week, the earliest we can expect to get motorsport action in Scotland is around the end of April.

Remember that during last year, one of the major barriers to motorsport, aside from locally based club events, was the restrictions on travel. In her Statement today, Nicola Sturgeon said that she will give more detail next week on what the Covid19 Level based restrictions might look like by then. This might include comment on travel between Local Authority areas. When we meet on 16th March, I will try to give as up to date assessment as I can together with my view on how I think the next few months might pan out.

SAMSC AGM Update

The 2020 AGM in March last year was an early casualty of Covid19. We postponed again in June in the hope that we would be back together by September but in the event, that was still not possible. We thus held the AGM on Zoom to comply with the SAMSC rules of holding an AGM within 18 months of the previous one. This brings us to the next AGM. The rules would actually allow this to be deferred to March 2022 but that is considered less than ideal in terms of accepting the annual accounts and appointing officers.

The SAMSC Executive have decided that the 2021 AGM will therefore be held in June this year. As things stand, there is a possibility this might be held face to face on the planned date of 15th June. We will keep this under close review and it might be that we push this out one or even two weeks depending on Covid restrictions at that time but it will be no more than that and will revert to Zoom only if required.

SAMSC Finances

Keith will provide a full update to the March meeting but the SAMSC Executive have been engaged in a thorough debate around this topic. We made the decision almost a year ago to support member clubs by waiving the annual subscription due by September 2020 for the 2021 year and in line with that decision, the Executive have tried as best we can to restrict outgoing expenditure. The subscription payable for 2022 will be discussed at our March meeting.

Keith will also lead a discussion on the level of SAMSC reserves. Member clubs might recall our debate a few years ago around the level of funds accumulated with a view expressed at that time that the Association did not need to hold a high level of cash reserves. Since the end of 2015, with the agreement of member clubs, reserves have been depleted by almost £3,000. The current SAMSC rules make no mention of a minimum level of financial reserves although current best practice is that non-profit organisations like the Association should have an agreed reserves policy set at a level appropriate to the normal cash outflow of the organisation.

SAMSC Rules / Constitution

The rules of the Association were written when the East and West Associations came together in 2010 and were last tweaked in 2018. Recent events, including the need to hold meetings and votes by Zoom and the consideration of financial reserves, has led the Executive to consider if a further refresh is needed. This is currently work in progress but if any club has a view on the current rules, please share these with a member of the Executive.

Motorsport UK Club and Volunteer of the Year

I want to give a big shout out to Scottish Motorsport Marshals Club for being recognised by being highly Commended in the recent awards.

Motorsport UK Rally Review

The last two issues of the Motorsport UK Revolution magazine have covered the usual very wide range of topics (including in January, an interview with yours truly) but I know that many of you will be interested in the coverage of Stage rallying. Motorsport UK CEO, Hugh Chambers, talks about this at length in January and unsurprisingly, David Richards, covers it in his review of his first three years as Chairman. The more recent edition talks about the Forestry England Motorsports Review. While this does not directly affect Scotland, it is not something we should ignore.

The lack of a round of the world championship for the UK in 2021 has prompted a number of questions regarding the future of rallying in the UK, and specifically forest stage rallying. The concerns stretch beyond the WRC right down to the grassroots of the sport. Hugh Chambers has written that the sport is very much about accessibility for competitors and spectators alike and the ability for the amateur to pit their skills against better funded competitors. He adds that we need to get back to a much simpler and cost-effective format for rallying without the technical arms race that now extends down the hierarchy of the sport. Motorsport UK are drawing together a group of people from the spectrum of stakeholders who can bring expert skills to the table, and a fresh set of ideas on how rallying in the UK can be reinvented for the new age.

I know that Motorsport UK is keen to hear from everyone with their thoughts and ideas on how rallying might move forward in future years. It has been suggested to me that SAMSC might play a role in facilitating a discussion across Scotland and possibly co-ordinating input to Motorsport UK. I am happy for us to talk about this at our meeting but it is worth me saying at the outset that the views of everyone are valid and the slight downside of a combined response is that the ideas of one person might get lost in the mass.

If you want to have your own say, please write to rally@motorsportuk.org.

New members for Motorsport UK Committees 2022

For full details, please see recent Revolution Magazine. I would urge all SAMSC clubs to bring this to the attention of all their members. If you or anyone else are interested but want to understand more about what is involved, please contact me. To be considered, email your motorsport CV along with a letter explaining why you feel you can contribute to the future development of motorsport to: committeeinterest@motorsportuk.org by Friday 2nd July. Please state which committee you are applying for. The Nominations and Appointments Committee will review all applications received and submit recommendations to the Motorsport UK Board for approval. New members will be informed of their appointments in September

SAMSC role in communication from Motorsport UK

In times gone past, one of the roles of this Association was to act as a channel through which the governing body passed information to clubs, and through them, to your members. In response to long running feedback from various corners of the motorsport community, Motorsport UK has made considerable steps forward in the last few years in the way it communicates more directly with everyone including clubs, licenced officials, competition licence holders and registered marshals using emails and social media. The introduction of the RS Clubman licence enabled direct communication with anyone who had until then competed only on their club membership card.

This has caused me to pause and reflect on the risk that the increased volume of communication might simply become “noise” and that because of this, an important message might be diluted or even lost. In my own case, I get information through my chairmanship of SAMSC but also through my seat on Council and other committees as well as being a licenced official, a registered marshal and still holding a competition licence. Wearing my SAMSC ‘hat’ my dilemma is to wonder how much of what I know should be included in my reports to SAMSC clubs through the quarterly meetings, through update emails to the SAMSC newlist and through SAMSC social media. I try to strike a balance by not simply re-sending stuff that everyone should have already seen but would welcome feedback from anyone who thinks I am getting this wrong.

I have had conversations with several people recently who tell me that they are not kept up to date by Motorsport UK. When pressed, they confirm that, for a variety of reasons, they have not renewed their competition or official’s licence and that they are not a registered marshal. In all cases, I have urged the individual to apply for an RS Clubman licence which has no cost but which does get them on the Motorsport UK communication radar. Please pass this message on to all your club members.

Motorsport UK Club contact details

On the same subject, one of the emails I get is the monthly Club News. This is sent out to the email address provided by each registered club. I would urge all SAMSC member clubs to make sure you know who, at your club, is getting this and to update the details with Motorsport UK if necessary. I would also like to suggest that whoever gets this email gives consideration to anything in it that should be communicated to your own club members. Remember that you will have members who might not be on the Motorsport UK direct contact radar.

Recent updates from Motorsport UK

So, having made that point, there has been a flurry of messages from Motorsport UK that I think are worth mentioning in my report to the March SAMSC meeting.

Move to Bicester

The move from Colnbrook is completed albeit many staff are still working from home due to Covid19. New address is Motorsport UK, Bicester Motion, OX27 8FY. Phone numbers remain the same.

Motorsport UK Internal Structure & Staffing

As well as moving home, Motorsport UK has slightly reorganised the organisational structure. I have not quite got my head around it all yet but I do know that Ian Davis is stepping back from much of what he did and that Ian 'Scunner' Campbell is taking on at least some of his role. Also, Claire Kirkpatrick has taken on the role of Motorsport UK's Club Development Manager. Working within the Learning and Development Team, Claire will be your contact for all club development queries going forward. Please email club.development@motorsportuk.org with any questions, future webinar ideas and more.

Marketing Shows for Clubs

The Monthly Marketing Show series started in November and the final one has been rescheduled for the same evening as the March SAMSC meeting. I have been on some of these and they are useful to any club looking to grow. The full programme is available to view at www.motorsportuk.org/clubs-organisers/club-webinars/

Updated COVID-19 Signage

Ready for the next restart, Motorsport UK has produced updated COVID-19 signage, depicting a number of guidance messages, from washing hands to nearest sanitisation point and several more. Go to the Motorsport website to find out more.

Club Sustainability Webinar

The first Sustainability Webinar for Clubs took place on 16 February. Club responses were very positive with over 100% of clubs suggesting that they would now consider implementing an Environmental Management System (EMS). I would encourage all SAMSC clubs to engage with Motorsport UK on the wide ranging Sustainability agenda.

Club Safeguarding Officers Database

Motorsport UK is creating a central database of all Motorsport UK Club Safeguarding Officers (CSO). This is to ensure they have up to date contact details and can send any relevant information directly to safeguarding officers. Clubs should have already responded to this request but if not, then can I urge all SAMSC clubs to make contact with jenny.morse@motorsportuk.org.

Club Membership Cards

Motorsport UK have confirmed that digital club cards are allowed and that for clubs that do not want to create their own, they are developing a digital club card template which will be communicated in the coming weeks. They are no longer producing pre-printed club membership cards. Clubs are free to produce their own in physical or electronic format. The following information must be included:

- Name of Club
- Name of Member
- Membership Number
- An Expiry Date for the period of validity of the membership.
- Optional Place for the members signature (if physical card issued)
- Optional QR code (if digital card issued)
- Optional Approved Motorsport UK Recognised Club logo and warning Notice A.

Rewriting the Rules

Motorsport UK is embarking on a fundamental review and reform of its National Competition Rules (aka the Blue Book), with a view to implementation on 1st January 2023. The aim is to simplify, and modernise the existing regulations, bringing improvements in structure and ensuring compatibility with the International Sporting Code. Motorsport UK is embarking on a period of consultation with its membership. Please encourage your club members to participate in a 10 question survey to help develop the new rules or send an email to nationalcompetitionrules@motorsportuk.org
https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/R5M2TXD?utm_source=Motorsport+UK+mailing+list&utm_campaign=ddebca87f-EMAIL_CAMPAIGN_2020_09_23_10_07_COPY_01&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_a b28cacf8a-ddebca87f-56020633&mc_cid=ddebca87f&mc_eid=76b68a1035

The Vnuk insurance issue

Motorsport UK has confirmed that its considerable efforts alongside the UK government to defeat this threat has been successful. The Department for Transport has confirmed that it is taking the necessary steps to exempt the UK, and consequently UK motorsport, from the implications of the EU Motor Insurance Directive. The EU rules would have meant any motorsport collision would have been treated as regular road traffic accidents requiring insurance.

As is usually the case, I will update this Chairman's report if more information comes to light that I think you need to know before the meeting and will almost certainly want to add further comments on the night.

Until then, stay safe.

Pete Weall

Chair Scottish Association of Motor Sports Clubs