

Chairman's Report to the March AGM & General Meeting of SAMSC

You know that I try to lead by example when writing my meeting report. Specifically, it would be great if all the various reports could be circulated to you a couple of weeks before the SAMSC meeting. So, I am writing this full of good intentions but, as is often the case, in the knowledge that the way things are moving in our world at the moment, I will still need to add loads to my verbal update on the 19th.

We have of course been following the closed road issue with great interest. Since our last meeting, the public consultation was launched and completed. The response from our community was fabulous; leading to more than 3,700 replies. The recently published analysis confirms that this was overwhelmingly positive and supportive. Following on from the public consultation, the draft legislation has now been laid before the Scottish Parliament and is going through the next stage which will take a few more weeks but unless something unexpected happens, this will be signed into law sometime in April.

The new legislation makes specific reference to the Jim Clark and Mull rallies which have run in the past under their own legislative Orders and this makes allowance for both of these events being approved to run in 2019 subject to them having completed all the required process steps. I know that the organising teams behind these two iconic events have been on the case for some time in anticipation of reaching this stage and, in the case of the Jim Clark Rally, they are now at full speed aiming for their preferred May Bank Holiday weekend date. Motorsport UK are fully on board with this as are the respective Local Authorities.

Speaking of Motorsport UK, this was of course all breaking news when we last met and as was expected, much has happened in the short time since then. Having taken up his role on 1 November last year, CEO Hugh Chambers has led a number of changes in personnel. These are all covered in Motorsport UK publications so I will not repeat them here but I will just say that he is building a strong new team who bring with them a wealth of experience but hopefully some new ideas. More importantly, I get the impression that there is already a culture change and it remains to be seen how much this will benefit our clubs as well as competitors, officials and volunteer marshals.

I do know that SAMSC clubs were disappointed by the news from Motorsport UK that there would not be any rebate of the 2018 insurance premiums collected and paid as part of event permit fees. While it is true that this was always an annual decision by Motorsport UK based on the economics of each year, it had become something that came more as an expectation than a surprise. We cannot fail to be aware of the changing situation in the overall 'blame and claim' culture. If my own phone records are to be believed, I have at least one accident every week at which I was not at fault! Like it or not someone has to pay for this and the resulting impact has been felt across the whole insurance market.

There are other changes in the wind of the Governing body and I expect to be fielding questions from you at our meeting. We hope to have a least one senior staff member from Motorsport UK at one of our meetings very soon but at the time of writing, I can't confirm this will be in March.

I was delighted when it was confirmed that Gillian Sefton had come through a thorough selection process to take up the position of SMS Development Manager and I look forward to us all working closely with her. Her promotion does however leave a gap and I may be able to update you on progress towards replacing the development officer role at our meeting. The SMS project remains important to us all.

I would like to share with you some brief facts about the overall landscape of events in Scotland during 2018. Based on data I obtained from Motorsport UK, 47 individual Clubs applied for 519 Event Permits which, allowing for multiple permits, breaks down to 388 events. There were at least 8,155 competitors on these events (I can't be more accurate because clubs are not required to send numbers to Motorsport UK for CoE events like Touring Assemblies).

Events took place in around 200 different venues. One third of all events were Cross Country and a similar number of Autotests. There is a good spread of entries across the various disciplines. Many clubs exist to promote a single discipline like Racing, Karting or Cross Country but more than half of the clubs promote more than one discipline and in the case of nine clubs, three or more.

Most Active Clubs ordered by Number of events run in 2018		
Club	Total Events	Total Entries
Scottish Land Rover Owners Club	26	500
Isle of Lewis Car Club	23	301
Buchan Off Road Drivers Club	21	205
Solway Car Club Ltd	21	369
Most Active Clubs ordered by Competitor Numbers in 2018		
Club	Total Entries	Total Events
West of Scotland Kart Club	720	12
Scottish Motor Racing Club	538	6
Scottish Land Rover Owners Club	500	26

The 2019 competition season has got off to a shaky start with the cancellation of the Snowman Rally but other series have got on a bit better with first rounds of the Tarmac Rally Championship and the SAMSC Autosolo series both completed. Between writing this and our meeting, the Border Counties Rally will have kicked off the Forest Rally Championship while first rounds will have been run of the SAMSC Navigational Rally Championship and the newly reintroduced SAMSC Autotest Championship. I also know that the Cross Country 4x4 community are active up and down the country in addition to club level autotests and 12 car rallies.

I am very much looking forward to my next visit to West of Scotland Kart Club at Larkhall to see their recently completed track extension. Their first meeting of 2019, on this new track, should happen between me writing this and our meeting. It is also great to see the news flowing from Scottish Motor Racing Club as they look to build themselves up and I look forward in particular to seeing how their entry level C1 class goes.

Until we meet on the 19th March

Pete Weall

Chair Scottish Association of Motor Sport Clubs