

Chairman's Report to the November 2020 General Meeting of SAMSC

Yet again it falls on me to put down my thoughts ahead of a meeting and yet again, it is with a great deal of frustration that I do so. Once again, will meet in the virtual world of Zoom. An agenda will be published as usual but as is always the case, I want to allow as much time for discussion and idea sharing as possible.

We expect to have a couple of guests from Motorsport UK. Technical Sporting Director, John Ryan, has a key role in leading the sport through the pandemic and of particular interest to us, is the lead contact with the Scottish Government through SportScotland. I feel certain that you will have questions for him. Head of Sport Promotion, Ian Berry, has been with us before and is working in particular on ideas designed to support clubs in the goal of attracting new people to the sport and also perhaps attracting some who have left it back into the fold. I know that he is as keen to hear your thoughts and ideas as much as to share his.

Can I ask you all to give thoughts to any specific items you might want them to deal with? While putting them "on the spot" might be entertaining, I suggest that we will get more value if they can come prepared to speak about the particular topics you want them to cover.

There has been some limited motorsport activity in recent weeks and I call out with much admiration those clubs that have been putting on events while adhering to the Covid19 protocols. There has been Racing, Rallycross and Super Lap at Knockhill as well as Autotests and Cross-Country action in car parks and fields up and down Scotland. The major missing element is any form of rally with the Scottish Government restrictions on car sharing still in place.

When we last 'met', I thought I was on the verge of sharing some good news on this front but sadly, that did not transpire. If anything, the situation has gone backwards since then. The position taken by the Scottish Government is published and freely available for all to see on their website. In terms of sport, these have all been divided for simplicity into one of four classification. Firstly, do they take place indoors or outside. Secondly, can 2m social distance be maintained, in which case it is described as 'non-contact. Clearly, two people a rally car are not 2m distant and thus, this falls into the classification of being a 'contact' sport. Please don't get hung up on the precise wording of this classification. It must be clear to all of us that the occupants of a car are neither outside nor are they 2m distant. Indoor contact sport will not be allowed until an area is in Tier Zero. Your guess is as good as mine as to when this might be the case but I fear it will not be any time soon.

Discussions to get this classification revised are ongoing but are taking place against the background of the Scottish Governments stated approach of applying caution in the face of continued high level of Covid19 prevalence. Just yesterday, Monday 2nd November, Motorsport UK confirmed that club level motorsport would not be allowed through the four week 'lockdown' in England bringing that nation into line with Northern Ireland and Wales where motorsport was already on full hold. As I sit to write this piece, two weeks ahead of our meeting, all of this activity is still allowed across Scotland under the new five tier system although clubs must be conscious of the need to not allow two people in a car and also the advice against non-essential travel especially in and out of any area designated as level 3 or 4.

In the meantime, I hope that all clubs are keeping up to date with communication from Motorsport UK. In particular, I apologise but I am a couple of days late in being able to use this report to remind you of the process to nominate clubs and volunteers of the year. I hope you got yours in on time.

I also want to highlight the programme of Motorsport UK webinars aimed at clubs covering the topic of making best use of social media. The first one is on Tuesday 10th November (the week before our meeting). Ian Berry may be able to say more about these but if you don't want to miss the first one, get signed up now.

Finally, I want to call out yet again, the great work done by the SAMSC training team in putting on the programme of online marshal training throughout this difficult year. This also gives me an opportunity to highlight the contribution made to the cost of this by the British Motor Sports Training Trust. During the Covid-19 pandemic, the BMSTT has continued to support the volunteer sector of our sport, not least in providing additional grant aid to assist Rescue Units, Stage Safety Units and Recovery Units with certain costs incurred during the lockdown. You can learn more about how the charity operates from their website where you will also find an opportunity to donate towards their work. All charities are facing cash pressures but if your club is looking for one to support, please consider one that is close to what we do.

<https://www.bmstt.org/index.html>

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