

MSA Council Meeting Tuesday 14th March

With Bruce away in Australia, I represented him at the MSA Council meeting. It was a relatively short meeting followed in the evening by a dinner hosted by Council Chairman, Tony Scott Andrews, at which other guests joined.

The bulk of the Council meeting deals with various rule changes put forward by either the specialist committees or, in the case of safety, directly from the MSA Executive. In most cases, these have also been through the general consultation process which allows any licence holder, including competitors and officials, to have input. Changes agreed included tyre regulations for Trials, A new safety notice relating to spectator areas (applicable to all events), various specification changes relating to Karts, log book requirements for Autocross & Rallycross space frame cars and minor changes to the stock list on rally rescue vehicles.

Rob Jones then reported on various matters supported by other MSA executives. He reported on licence holder and permit numbers. These show a number of ups and downs but across the board, the numbers show a static position, in other words, the sport is stagnant rather than growing as we would want it to be. This lack of growth, linked to the current low interest rate situation, has put pressure on the MSA financial situation. This is not helped by the significant cost that will accrue from being involved in the Fatal Accident Inquiry due to start in Edinburgh in July and which will involve MSA staff being in Court every day for up to 10 weeks. All of this leads to a need to identify significant cost savings at the MSA.

He went on to mention the 10 pillar strategy review which would be discussed by the MSA Board in more detail at their meeting the next day. He did say that a working group had already been established to look into the overall governance structure (pillar 1).

On more positive news, he said that the secondary legislation to allow motorsport events on closed roads was very close and is expected to become law in April. This will, at that stage, apply only to England and is regarded as a devolved matter. The Welsh Assembly have already said that it will scrutinise the new law and may go out to public consultation rather than simply adopt it as they would be entitled to do. Of more interest to us, the Scottish Government have said that they will defer any decision on adopting the new law until the findings of the FAI.

Simon Blunt gave an update on the Vnuk issue which has been covered in various MSA publications recently (and also in my report of Regional Committee). The MSA response to the HM Government consultation is almost complete and will be published by them before the end of March. Simon made it clear that this is an issue with UK law not being compliant with the European Court ruling and that under current UK legislation, there is no requirement for any competition vehicle to have 3rd party insurance when taking part on an MSA permitted event that does not use the public road. Insurance is of course required for rallies that use sections of public road. In other words, there is no change. The current UK Governmental stance is that they do not want to make any change to this and that they believe the existing UK insurance requirements are more than adequate.

Peter Weall