



NEWS

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Annual General Meeting Reports



In his annual report Colin Wright said that 2014 had been a somewhat difficult year with smaller clubs struggling to maintain profitability and more clubs expected to host IKR racing, where more seniors seem to race. He believed the ABkC should formulate a framework for IKR racing. He noted that our fantastic sport is becoming more of a children’s activity and he would continue to press the MSA for relaxation on medicals before we see more circuits lost to MSA racing. He noted that Juniors held up well and gearbox is looking good for a bright future. He thought the trial of the International Steward system was a positive note. The most important thing is to bring in more participants, re-invigorate the O Plates to benefit smaller clubs. Investigations have shown that Royal Mail could target key cities by demographics for probably £500 per club. But first we need to lower entry costs to the sport, have less classes, protect drivers from commercial pressures and bring in our Drivers Association. Those round the table here have all the skills to advance these ideas. We also need to look into licencing mechanics and teams and give them value for their expertise. The MSA has a key role to play in all of those. Drivers have many choices for their karting between MSA, IKR, F100 and Historic racing.

In his Secretary’s report Graham Smith said we had 29 clubs in membership this year compared with 30 the previous year, but two new clubs have just joined – Whilton Mill rejoining and the newly MSA affiliated FP4k a brand new member. We thank the clubs for their support of the ABkC. The clubs reported a total

membership of 4436 very similar to the 4489 in 2013 and licences are going to be very similar at 3900 compared with 3986 in 2013, but participation is increased and so is the number of permits issued. Pack sales are inevitably down significantly presumably because of the higher price. In his view the ABkC should be all about encouraging affordable karting, not racing for millionaires children, and to that end we had some success in encouraging the MSA to reduce the Start Karting price to £60 including the cost of one or two licences, and ARKS doing their part by reducing the test fee to £50 for 2015. We are also working with the MSA to re-launch Tyro, or Clubman racing as it is now called with no medical or ARKS test required. We have issued five newsletters throughout 2014 to keep the clubs informed of developments and proposals, also printed in the magazines. We returned to KartMania with ARKS and the MSA where we were kept very busy and will be at Autosport again. Smith said he has also project managed the new and very successful website which is getting three requests per day for brochures and DVDs every single day, that’s 1000 potential new karters per annum. The new Start Karting brochure has been printed with less emphasis on karting being a route to Formula 1, for which we had some criticism. The club development fund allocated £1815 in 2014, so there will be about £5500 available for 2014/5.



Graham Smith also gave the Treasurer’s Report and distributed the audited accounts through to 31 October.

The tyre income for prize funds straddles accounting periods so the 2014 accounts show income at £45519.35 (£19449.30 in 2013) and expenses at £30905.23 (£29255.50 in 2013) so a profit of £14614.12 (compared with a loss of £9806.20 in 2013). It varies depending when the tyre funds are paid in. So stripping out tyre prize funding the loss on the year is £443.68 compared with a loss of £693.40 in the previous year. The cheque account stood at £24337.23 and the deposit account at £21869.43 at 31st October. The prize fund is lower due to the demise of Max 177 in the Super One.

2015 Steering Group

There were two nominations for Chairman, with Colin Wright and Nigel Edwards each giving a short presentation before the vote. Colin Wright was then re-elected in the post and gave thanks for the support. He added that he had told Rob Jones (MSA Chief Executive) exactly what was wrong and would continue to keep them honest. He thanked Nigel and would continue to support Nigel's role as Kart Committee chairman. Next there were ten nominations from member clubs for seven general steering group positions, the successful members for 2015 being: Martin Capenhurst (FP4K), Steve Clayton (South Yorks); Rob Dodds (Forest Edge); Nigel Edwards (TVKC); Malcolm Fell (Cumbria); Colin Lipscomb (Llandow) and Kelvin Nichols (Buckmore). The unsuccessful candidates were thanked for their interest. The non-contested positions are Secretary Graham Smith; Direct Drive Technical Keiran Crawley; Cadet Technical Paul Klaassen; Gearbox Technical Phil Featherstone. Also having a seat on the steering group are the BKIA (Peter Catt), Scottish and Northern Ireland Associations and F6 (Carol Blanchard, Stephen Tosh and Roger Sheffield), NKF (Sue Fairless), MSA and ABkC Championship promoters John Hoyle, Dan Parker, Ian Rushforth and non-voting Presidents, Rotax JAG, Tal-Ko and John Pike for the Drivers Association.

Informal Topics

Internet Meetings and Drivers Association

With the formal meeting concluded the floor was open for other topics. Colin Wright said the association had invested in the internet Go To Meeting, which allowed on line meetings to take place. It is open to individual clubs to use as well. John Pike gave a run down on his Drivers Association feedback, the drivers mainly concerned with contact driving and Honda engine regulations. He is about to complete a new website for the Drivers and envisages every club having a nominated driver representative to feed back views to him. The new CIK drooping front fairing is not finding favour amongst drivers, neither is the discrepancy between large budget teams and club drivers. He investigated why drivers choose IKR and it seems mainly

due to entry costs and the cost of tyres. Another club representative felt that competitors were not being treated properly as customers, he queried whether Clerks of the Course were trained in customer relations. He thought the ABkC should run its own seminars. It was noted that the MSA is planning 'anger management' modules at the 2015 seminars for Scrutineers. Another thought it was too easy for someone to call themselves a 'team', did they have insurance or DBS checks. It was said that Seniors have so much more choice of leisure activities these days. It was considered that the Constitution could be changed to give voting rights to a Drivers Association representative.

Marketing of the ABkC

The Chairman felt we should be spending more of our money on this subject. Another added most people don't perceive karting as a professional sport until they get involved. Some clubs have tried mail shots to schools but get an adverse reaction from Mums who perceive motorsport as dangerous, yet will allow their children to play rugby for instance. It was thought demonstrations of fast karts at the Schools and University championships might help. It was noted that the MSA is again behind on the use of the IAME funds for Cadet promotion. Other ideas put forward were for promotion to older persons, short videos for each age group, safe driving using Bambino karts at schools or tracks, facebook promotions, employment of a social media professional.

Register of Teams and Traders

Noting that the MSA are discussing more use of team entrant licences and that the BKIA seem to be less engaged, it was mooted that the ABkC should licence mechanics. Parents seem to entrust their children to team personnel who are probably not DBS checked. Team managers and mechanics should be made accountable for their actions so there was a large majority in favour of licencing mechanics. The ABkC could be a DBS issuing authority and could source insurance cover for the mechanics.

Clubman Racing

The MSA has re-launched Tyro as Clubman karting, and it was proposed that the ABkC could contribute to a first licence for seniors if the MSA would also offer a discount. Juniors under 16 still get a free first licence. There is still a power limit of 10bhp for Juniors and 15bhp for Seniors and the MSA is drawing up a set of class regulations.

Family Code of Practice

A club complained bitterly about how families treat the facilities at kart circuits eg leaving rubbish, not picking up dog fouling, abusing the toilets by putting even tin cans down, leaving tyres behind and bad behaviour in local hotels and hostelrys. Some felt the arrogance comes from teams, others said the clubs could charge a deposit, refundable on leaving a clean pit area.

Kartmania



Martin Capenhurst said most comments from this year's show were favourable but partly due to the lack of support from the largest trade companies, teams and promoters it is hard to continue and to give clubs free stands. It was later agreed that the ABkC would become a co-sponsor of the show.

Steering Group Meeting

The steering group committee met after the AGM and elected Nigel Edwards as vice-chairman. Tal-Ko was supported in its request to all clubs to ban Mr Scothern who had admitted illegally modifying engines for MSA racing. Llandow, the Drivers Association and Cumbria Kart Club were all awarded grants from the Club Development Fund. Bids for the 2015 ABkC Gearbox O Plate events were considered and Cumbria was awarded the KZ1 on 12 April, the KZ UK on 30 August and Rissington to have the 250 National at the Midland Championships on 30 August. There was a discussion about the recent announcement of a new EVO Rotax engine, noting that the usual 6-month notice had not been given for new internal parts. The major changed components that make up the EVO engine of carburettor, exhaust, electronically controlled power valve, loom and battery box are not being put forward for the UK until 2016 but revised conrod, piston and crankshaft are suggested for 2015 use. The piston and crankshaft are visually practically identical but the conrod does look slightly different. The crankcase and cylinder head now come painted, but otherwise are the same. A meeting with the MSA will be held to seek the way forward on both aspects. There will be a subsidised upgrade package of £495 plus VAT which JAG will keep open until at least July 2016. The next Steering Group

meeting will be held in early March where any new Club Development applications will be considered.

New Kart Videos

Come Karting explanatory video



Alan Taddei of Super1TV productions has been busy recently producing a much needed update for the official MSA/ARCS video that is in the Start Karting packs. The new video will be in the packs as from the Autosport Show and there is a shorter version to show at the actual tests. He has also completed the interim new Come Karting video commissioned jointly by the ABkC and ARKS, with some interviews needed to complete, and has also made a short enticing promo video. The interim Come Karting will be available to give out at Autosport. Clubs are welcome to use either or both on their websites, you can find them on the ABkC Videos page. Next in line are shorter promotional videos aimed at each age category, starting with one aimed at prospective Bambino, which is already on line.

Get started in Bambino promo video



Happy New Year to all clubs, competitors and team members, best wishes for a successful 2015.

(Editor Graham Smith, email secretary@abkc.org.uk)