



NEWS

January 2012

Chairman – Russell Anderson, Unit 2/3, Sterling Ind Est, Carwood, Castleford, WF10 4PS

Secretary - Graham Smith:

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The Annual General Meeting

A healthy turn out with 12 clubs and thirty persons were represented at the new mid-week trial for the AGM, held at Donington on 14th December. Guests from Tal-Ko (Grahame Butterworth), MSA (Rob Jones) and Mills Racing (Mike Mills) were welcomed. In his chairman's address, Russell Anderson said that 2011 was a quite difficult year for the Association and the Steering Group, which has been adjusting from its former role as the Kart Regional Committee to its work with the new MSA Kart Committee and continue its representation on the other MSA committees. It is quite a task to keep track of all the various proposals. He said the Karting Green Paper output following consultation is now working through committees and future regulations have, or will be, out for consultation on the MSA website and they are being massaged into shape for 2013. The ABkC is supporting the core class homologation proposals but we are still formulating a response to the championship proposals. We are focussed on the club structure and the competitors who must be able to continue to race at all ABkC clubs under the same rules everywhere. We must never lose that, he said. We also want the sport to look simpler and easier to enter. The ABkC has spent quite a lot on grants for the Lets Go Karting scheme which has now reached the end of financial support from us and the MSA. We are setting up a Club Development Fund as a direct response to last year's AGM comments and as a result of clubs believing they did not get any direct financial benefit from the tyre contract prize fund for the national championships. He said he urged all club committee members to study the new championship proposals and take the time to comment to the MSA. He commented that the ABkC Steering Group members were feeling that the ABkC functions were somewhat eroded and in his view the new MSA committee structure is too complex, each committee thinking it is making rules then finding another committee has a different view. He urged the MSA to consider simplifying the system and slimming it down to become more efficient. New tyre and championship contracts for 2013 will be at the top of our agenda in 2012, and Russell gave his thanks to the steering group members, the sub-committee chairpersons and a special mention to the secretary Graham Smith.

Secretary's Report

In his secretary's report Graham Smith said we had 34 clubs in membership this year, who reported 4795 membership total compared with 4931 last year, continuing the gradual decline in MSA kart racing which we are all working to try and reverse. The new format O Plate for all direct drive classes at Rowrah was a big success, but it is sad that no one challenged Cumbria to run the 2012 event. That club has even better ideas for their event next year. The gearbox O Plate numbers were a bit down, and the CIK hard version of the Dunlop tyre for KZ2 has been tested and adopted for 2012.

We have issued three newsletters to keep the clubs informed of developments and proposals and worked hard with the MSA on the various committees, including the new Kart Committee. It was disappointing how few clubs took up the Lets Go Karting subsidised Cadet kart offer, despite MSA and ABkC financial help. However Lets Go Karting graduates are firmly in mainstream racing now, proving the value of the scheme. Cumbria has been the most productive, selling more of the karts than anywhere else.

Following the MSA lead we have extended the ABkC championship and tyre contracts for another year, so that hopefully our national championships which have run since 1990 or so can continue afresh in 2013. We fully adopt the policy of only having one set of seeded numbers per class and it is unhelpful that certain championships continue to offer numbers even although they cannot be used at ABkC clubs. Graham urged the MSA to make the decisions of the Kart Championship Control Panel public. The ABkC were on hand at the Autosport in January, lent space by Super One, and at Motorsport UK as an experiment but the public support there was poor. We are joining into the new Karting Pavilion at January's Autosport, which sees a resurgence in karting interest. We have renewed the stock of the Come Karting promotional DVD's, and will publish the 2012 Start Karting brochure in January. With several kart classes coming out of the Gold Book, to try and dispel the perception of too many kart classes, we now submit these class regulations individually for KTEs which clubs can use in their SRs. Clubs need to remember that the official regulations can only be amended if a KTE approval is given. Some clubs were found to be running non-approved classes in 2011.

Treasurer's Report

Graham Smith has also taken on the Treasurer duties, and he thanked his wife Ann for putting every thing onto an accounting package, make it easier to administer. He also thanked Marion Fell for carrying out an independent audit. His full report is available on the ABkC website but the net worth of the association after dispersment of the prize fund is approximately £32,200. In his opinion despite the increased outgoings on grants the bank balances are still in a healthy situation, well above the minimum of £20,000 often stated to be the absolute minimum required as a reserve for any legal challenge to the Association. However the steering group should take action to increase income in order at a minimum to balance all administrative and publicity outgoings. It should be noted that all tyre suppliers have agreed to 15% of the 2012 prize money being kept back by the ABkC and used for a club development fund.

Steering Group nominations

Next was a review of the nominations for the 2012 steering group elected membership. The following were nominated:

Chairman: Russell Anderson; Secretary: Graham Smith; Direct Drive Technical: Keiran Crawley; Cadet Technical: Paul Klaassen; Gearbox Tech: Phil Featherstone and the seven general places: Mike Coombs (Shenington), Nigel Edwards (TVKC), Malcolm Fell (Cumbria), Kelvin Nichols (Buckmore), Rob Dodds (Forest Edge), Steve Clayton (South Yorks), Alistair Parker (South Yorks). No vote was required and those above were duly elected, the two new members welcomed. In addition to the elected members, all the regional kart associations can send a representative, as can promoters of ABkC national or British championships, and the BKIA and the MSA.

Question & Answer – new Championship Proposals

The formal part of the meeting was now ended and an informal question and answer session commenced with a long discussion on the MSA's championship proposals. The majority conclusion to this was that championships should not be limited to 30 in each class, because by doing so costs would go up dramatically, disappointed drivers from non-qualification would likely either leave the sport or race in foreign championships. The current championship system has evolved to suit competitors needs, and less than 10% take part in the various national championships anyway. The new proposals force competitors by legislation not to compete where they want. It was said that competitors in the national championships did not by and large contribute to the Green Paper but many more did contribute to a Super One survey. It was also noted that some clubs felt that the major championships stole away some drivers from club racing. Restriction as such would be terrible but breaking away from the MSA as some mooted would be catastrophic. The Chairman noted that the seeded numbering proposed of 1 to 10, plus GP and O Plates only, will raise the prestige of the championships without any need to restrict entries. Rob Jones, General Secretary of the MSA and Kart Committee chairman, urged clubs and associations to forward their comments and he stressed the respect the MSA has for the ABkC who he knows are totally dedicated to the sport. He took the opportunity to thank all who play a role. Representatives of two smaller clubs said that they see themselves as feeders through to the large clubs and championships, and their new members look in awe at S1 and FKS competitors with the aspiration to do the same. There was also a desire that some classes can support two tiers of championship, the national one offering the numbers plus another as a learning area.

Insurance and CRB Checks for teams and traders

The next subject was regarding insurance and CRB checks for teams and traders. The government seems to state that any position which otherwise involves regularly caring for, training, supervising or being solely in charge of persons under 18 should be CRB checked, so it follows that teams offering such services should ensure their principal and employees are checked. The ABkC is recommending that all teams and traders should carry public liability insurance when at the race track. The ABkC has a pro-forma available on request and at least one club has already distributed it around the paddock for completion for 2012. A club member urged all clubs to stick together on this matter, and asked the steering group to discuss further at its next meeting. Rob Jones said that the MSA's John Symes would be happy to offer further advice.

Honda GX160 New Engine

Kelvin Nichols gave a presentation on the forthcoming replacement for the Honda engine, the GX160T2 which will comply with the latest emission standards in the EU and California. Honda has kept Kelvin informed at all stages and he will be incorporating the engine into the 2012 regulations although it is not yet known exactly when the engine will be available, but when it is the current GX160 will cease

production. At the moment it is envisaged a small modification will be necessary to align the performance with the current engine, costing about £5. The new engine is expected to cost about 10 Euros more.

Club Development Fund

A discussion was raised about administering the new Club Development Fund. The Chairman said a small selection committee would be formed to decide on grants and it was suggested that clubs should match funding and may be given help to fill in any forms.

PG Entrants Licence

The MSA have now issued guidance on the new PG Entrants licence but basically a parent or guardian of all under-18 aged competitors must take out a PG Entrant licence (unless solely racing internationally). That licence must always be presented at signing on, and if the named parent is not present a letter of authority must be presented and kept by the club. The letter could state that it covers a certain championship or club year so that it doesn't have to be represented every time. Some present queried the need for this licence but Rob Jones explained the request came from the National Court, so they could call in a parent and not necessarily a child, to a tribunal.

Racing abroad in 2012

The FIA have published new regulations pertaining to racing abroad. All those wishing to race abroad must have an International licence, which limits it to those over the age of the year of their 13th birthday. So if a driver is 13 anytime during 2012 they will be able to obtain an International C licence. For national events abroad permission of their ASN is also required. Only professional drivers within the EU, having the EU flag on their licence, can earn points in a foreign championship.

Honda Senior

There was a request from the Llandow Kart Club for the Kartmania Challenge to be able to use the option of Bridgestone tyres as well as Dunlop in their series, which finished with 18 competitors in 2011. The chairman said the ABkC would not stand in the way of such a KTE application.

Llandow also requested that their Honda Kartmania Challenge should become the official ABkC Super Two championship but it was pointed out that for 2012 this had been granted to Cumbria again. There was also a potential conflict between finishing numbers given in the 2011 challenge and Super Two numbers which needs to be resolved.

TKM 4-Stroke Championship

Similarly on behalf of Tal-Ko and Llandow, Grahame Butterworth asked if the new TKM 4-stroke championship could take over issuing the official ABkC championship seeded numbers. This request was referred to the Steering Group for a decision. The meeting ended with Malcolm Fell thanking the ABkC for the Lets Go Karting grants and he said the club very much appreciated the help given.

2012 Membership Renewal

2012 membership forms have been sent to clubs – please pass onto your treasurer if appropriate and please return by 31st December if possible if you have not already done so, we really do need your continuing support. Renewed clubs are shown on the Members page on the website.

Finally very best wishes to all club committee, officials, marshals and competitors and their helpers for a great 2012 season of racing.

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