

Minutes

of the

Motorcycle Action Group

Annual Group Conference

April 09, 2011

Conference Chairman Jol Lawson, National Vice-Chair, welcomed delegates to the Conference, dealt with housekeeping issues and noted apologies from Aine Gale and Rick Hulse.

MAG(UK) Ltd Annual General Meeting

1. Report by Chairman of the Board: Paul Turner

Paul reported that the last 12 months had been "interesting". He noted the office move, which has saved the organisation money and is a better environment to work in; that membership is rising again and MAG is doing well. He then requested NC briefly introduce themselves as there are a number of new faces.

2. Report by Company Secretary: Steve Wykes

Steve confirmed MAG UK is solvent and operating legally.

3. Finance Director's report: Patrick Van Aalst (see also attached)

Patrick gave a run-down of income and expenditure noting that there had been a modest improvement across the board. He explained that costs for sub-contractors had increased over the previous year but that some of those costs should have been in last year's accounts. Wages have increased due to an increase in staff (including agency) and rent/rates were up due to paying two rents during the office changeover, although this will drop as rent for the new accommodation is less and it is easier to maintain. There has been an improvement in recording of information. MAG spent more than it earned but has been achieving more.

4. Finance questions

Following questions from the floor, it was confirmed that membership stood at 8,600 at the end of 2010 and that 5 people are employed full-time, plus one on a temporary basis for ticket sales. It was also clarified that an expected redundancy payment was subsequently not paid as the employee did not qualify for this.

Concern was expressed regarding the downward trend in membership but the number of activities engaged in was encouraging. Paul Turner noted that MAG is "catching up" with the £20.00 renewal offer following the increase in membership.

Neil Liversidge noted that despite living in an I.T. age MAG now employs more administrative staff than before. Paul Turner clarified the employees as Nich Brown (General Secretary), Paddy Tyson (Campaigns Manager), Louisa Smith (Deputy General Secretary), Katie Jupp (Membership) and Julie Sperling (Accounts). He noted that MAG is getting "more out of our staff than ever before" and that there may be scope to reduce some working hours in the future but not at the present time.

Patrick Van Aalst noted that although membership income is up, membership itself is down and that a membership drive is needed so that MAG can become less reliant on income from rallies.

Neil Liversidge raised a number of points regarding the efficiency of MAG's use of funds and Sheila MacFarlane confirmed that a new business plan is currently being worked on with a view to being in place by August/September. She also thanked Patrick for the quality of his presentation, which was reiterated by Paul Turner. It was noted that for those who wished, an electronic version of the information can be sent out.

#### 5. Reappointment of Auditors

It was asked whether this had been put out to tender, or the costs of auditing companies checked. It was confirmed that this had not been done but would be looked at for next year.

Stanley Yule were reappointed as Auditors.

#### 6. Resignation and election of Directors

Resignations: Tony Cox stepped down at the end of his tenure.

Elections: (Manifestos attached).

Patrick Van Aalst stood for election. It was asked whether he would be paid in this role and it was confirmed that none of the Directors are paid for this role.

Vote carried.

#### 7. Summing up: Paul Turner

Summing up, Paul noted that there had been a number of interesting debates. He declared the meeting closed at 11.35 am.

MAG (UK) Ltd AGM was duly closed by Mr. Turner and AGC opened.

## MAG Annual Group Conference 2011

### 1. Handover of Conference chair to National Vice-Chair

Conference chair Jol Lawson opened proceedings.

### 2. Review of 2010/11 campaign activity:

General Secretary: Nich Brown and Campaigns Coordinator: Paddy Tyson

Nich noted that he and Paddy deal with a mix of issues (local, national and European) and that they split the work between them so all issues are covered at all times.

Paddy spoke about the RAV campaign, which was started as we headed into the 2010 General Election, noting that it went very well reinvigorating political activity by MAG. He noted that 34 new branches had been started, with 29 of them progressing well. He then spoke about the mass lobby of Parliament in November, which helped to clarify what riders are interested in, noting that reductions in casualty figures featured quite highly. He then reminded Conference that local elections are approaching.

Nich then touched on the ministerial review of the implementation of the 2nd Driving Licence Directive which resulted in motorcycle tests becoming less accessible, and the massive impact that resulted from some manoeuvres being taken off-road. He mentioned that the Junior Minister for Transport (Motorcycling) is the minister behind putting as much of the test as possible back on the road and that there have now been some revisions to the current test which will be brought in from 16/05/11.

Paddy then filled in some of the background to this issue, as he is involved with the technical sub-group looking at issues relating directly to the technicalities of the test. He explained that the DSA had been adamant that they would not split the "swerve and stop" part of the test, and that they were originally supported by the DfT. However, the minister decided to visit a Multi-Purpose Test Centre and witness a motorcycle test to see what all the fuss was about, resulting in the DfT moving to the MAG camp regarding this matter! He also noted that the DfT/DSA plans to implement the 3rd Driving Licence Directive are based on riders re-taking the same test as they progress to bigger bikes and that the public consultation was challenged as not fit for purpose.

Nich gave further information regarding motorcycle tests and Type-Approval, noting that potentially, by around 2016/17, it may not be possible for owners to work on new machines at all due to a German-type MoT or Periodic Technical Inspection. He said that MEP's need to grasp the difference between customising or modifying a machine and "tampering".

He went on to say that MEP's need to read and support MAG's position statement on this and explained that although FEMA does not have a consensus on this matter, a number of member organisations are on board and will be organising opposition to it. There are discussions about the possibility of a Euro-demo around July/August with MAG Belgium and MAG Netherlands.

Pete Walker asked if it would be prudent and indeed feasible to organise demonstrations in each EU capital; Nich replied that doing so could dilute the main demonstration.

A question from the floor sought clarification regarding FEMA not being wholeheartedly behind this issue. Nich explained that FEMA comprises 27 organisations and runs by consensus, but MAG is working with individual riders' rights organisations.

Discussion ensued regarding MAG's financial contribution to FEMA (this works out at £1.00 per member), whether or not it would be feasible to organise a ride with ferry crossing for the demonstration, and whether the fight should continue regarding possible compulsory ABS (it must remain a matter of choice). It was suggested from the floor that MAG could consider working with other organisations, e.g. kit car manufacturers; this will be put on the Agenda for the next NC meeting.

Paddy then talked about the Get a Grip! Campaign, noting that it encompasses much more than just manhole covers and includes diesel spills, white lines and general improvement of road condition; he also commented that we currently have 19th century technology on 21st century roads and that the new composite manhole covers (which won the Prince Michael of Kent Road Safety Award in 2009) don't damage the road, have no scrap value (unlike the covers in use now) and can be incorporated on a "fit and forget" basis for a minimum of 15 years. Because Minister Mike Penning had observed that there is no perceived need for these replacement covers, a petition was passed round Conference, and it was noted that the cycle lobby is also supporting this.

A number of questions were taken from the floor including whether there is a commercial tie-up (yes, in as much as sponsorship means it pays for itself); whether the covers are relevant (yes, they provide a way of leading into other, related issues and have organisations such as ACPO on board lending credibility to MAG); and how the covers compare to traditional ones in wet conditions (traditional covers have a skid resistance of 20 (comparable to wet glass); composite covers have a skid resistance of 45 (giving consistency of grip)).

Following comments from Nich in respect to drink-driving statistics a recent case involving the death of a motorcyclist due to a drunk driver was brought to Conference's attention. The driver is understood to have shown no remorse stating that it didn't matter and that "motorcyclists go too fast anyway". The sentence given was low (3 years) where 7-9 years would be more usual. The question to Conference in light of this matter was whether MAG should campaign regarding this case specifically and/or campaign to get the relevant laws reviewed.

Neil Liversidge suggested that MAG should request the Attorney General look at this specific case and also request that government reviews and addresses disparities of sentencing. Ian Mumford noted that there was only one working day left to address the first option and that MAG should concentrate on the second option. Nich commented that a body of evidence would have to be built up in respect to parity of sentencing.

Jol Lawson suggested that Neil put together appropriate proposals during the lunch break and Conference would revisit the issue at the commencement of the afternoon session.

Conference breaks for lunch. A vote of thanks was proposed by Jol Lawson to East Yorkshire Region for hosting the Conference and to the venue staff for the catering.

Neil Liversidge put forward formal proposals in respect to the matter being discussed immediately prior to the lunch break. Andy Carrott noted that he was not against campaigning in respect of this particular case but that the feelings of the family of the deceased must be taken into account. A vote showed the motion to be carried. Following a brief discussion the second motion regarding campaigning for a government review of sentencing was also carried.

### 3. National Officers Reports

National Chairman: Paul Turner

Paul opened his comments by stating that he is enjoying the post of Chairman, noted that corporate membership has increased and promoted a local run taking place on 17/04/11.

He also mentioned that there would be debate regarding fund-raising for charities during Agenda item 6. (Motions to Conference) and gave an example of how it is possible to support other charities (e.g. marshalling) while receiving income for MAG as payment for such services.

General Secretary: Nich Brown

Nich began by noting that the new premises for Central mean that they are now fit for purpose, are suitable for hosting meetings and have saved both time and money enabling Central to be much more productive.

He also noted that efforts are being made to ensure some overlap of roles so that no area is left without cover when staff are absent due to annual leave or illness.

He stated that the membership database is poor and needs replacing by a more suitable system that can integrate with other systems. He noted that following difficulties in engaging and retaining a membership administrator, we now have someone in place in whom Nich has confidence and that the team is working well together.

Following discussion regarding the need to upgrade the membership system an offer of assistance was given by Jon Wilmer, a member whose job role is Management Information Systems.

The Road: Ian Mutch

Ian said that he has been trying to raise his game with The Road and that it is better that he is not praised for his work or he is liable to become complacent! He explained that he tries to maintain a balance of articles as motorcycling is a broad church and then noted that he has joined the i-age, resulting (inevitably!) in an anecdote. He further noted that there would be more political content and following a request for suggestions, received one for fewer pages with a black background.

#### 4. Election of National Officers (Manifestos attached)

National Chairman: Paul Turner

Proposed: Paul Turner, Seconded: Patrick Van Aalst.

National Finance Officer: Patrick Van Aalst

Proposed: Patrick Van Aalst, Seconded: Paul Turner.

It was proposed that the officers be voted in en bloc.

Carried unanimously.

It was noted that a National Clubs Officer is still required. Wendy Coy suggested extensive advertising, e.g. The Road, Network, etc. Fergus O'Connell, who stepped down from the post at last year's AGC, said he would put together information explaining the role.

#### 5. MAG Foundation report

Trustee: Nich Brown

Nich opened his remarks by requesting that someone step forward for the role of Trustee to the Foundation, as this would release him from the duties of this role enabling him to concentrate fully on his role as General Secretary.

He then offered his thanks to all Trustees for their hard work and stated that the Foundation had been set up with the right idea and could potentially benefit MAG and its campaigns greatly.

#### 6. Motions to Conference (see attached)

Motion 1: Charity fundraising (Proposed: Sheila McFarlane, Seconded: Den Powell)

This proved an emotive issue with many comments and observations from the Floor, some unfortunately losing objectivity and becoming personal.

Opening the debate, Jol Lawson, Chair, noted that the purpose of the proposal was not to remove the opportunity to give to charity, simply to give more focus to fundraising for MAG. Sheila McFarlane noted that raising funds for other organisations is not a core activity for MAG.

Ian Mutch endorsed her comments, stating that the proposal merely wished to send a message and should not bind anyone to anything, but that some MAG branches do not seem to be aware that they should raise funds for MAG.

Neil Liversidge noted that ideally money raised should be solely for MAG and that it required not a change to the Constitution but education of the membership.

Wendy Coy asked if the potential implications to MAG's own charitable arm, the MAG Foundation, had been looked at.

A member from Wykham MAG suggested that the proposed change implied some activities were permitted and others not, and further stated he was "suspicious of the motives behind the proposal". This observation unfortunately degenerated into comments wholly unsuitable to Conference that had to be curtailed by Jol Lawson, Chair.

At this point Pete Walker came back to the point that it may have implications not only for the MAG Foundation but also the NABD and National Youthbike (organisations who are given affiliation at no cost) and "respectfully requested the motion be withdrawn".

Motion withdrawn.

Motion 2: Creation of new Warwickshire region (Proposed: Andy Pyatt, Seconded: David Stead)

Neil Liversidge stated that the motion was defective because it contained conjecture and hearsay. David Stead responded that they are not professionals and that personal prejudice should be put aside. Ian Mutch then stated that Conference should recognise the spirit of the motion and not penalise it for the wording used.

Debate (sometimes heated) ensued regarding potential new boundaries and the effect this could have on existing branches and events. It seemed apparent that some members within the affected region were strongly against this motion; however Selina Lavender commented that she had attended their Regional AGM as Observer and was left with the feeling that the motion was supported by the active membership.

Paddy Tyson gave the example of Eastern Region being reduced by the creation of Lincolnshire Region, with the result that both regions are now operating more efficiently, and urged Conference to vote in favour of the motion.

Following further debate (again sometimes heated) regarding MAG's structure, Nich Brown stated that "the system is bust" and that a rethink of the organisational structure is needed; however in the meantime while a way forward is figured out Conference should support the motion.

Following a request to remove Solihull from the wording of the motion, which was agreed, Conference voted.

For: 61; Against: 14; Abstentions: 12. Motion carried.

Before moving on to the next Agenda item, it was noted that it is usual to vote in favour of renewal of affiliate membership for the NABD and National Youthbike. This was duly taken.

Vote carried.

7. Presidents Address: Ian Mutch

Ian opened his address by stating that he often looks at his notes and wonders what they mean. He then regaled Conference with several amusing anecdotes while noting that he is "increasingly impressed" by the political clout that MAG now commands, touching on a number of heavyweight issues that MAG is involved with and noting that there is

considerable scope for further development of the organisation including encouraging younger members in.

#### 8. Awards

Certificate of Merit:

Awarded to Wayne Rooney, Kitson Warrener, Sandra Garside, John Graves, Neil Daniell, Simon Deards, Ian Williamson, Sean Buckley, Clive & Jenny Cook, Aine Gale.

Richard Tegg Award:

Awarded to Tony Cox.

The Chairman's Award:

Awarded to Graham & Lesley Young.

#### 9. Presentation of Donations

Cheques were presented as follows:

by Czez Czerepara, on behalf of old Eastern Region: £88.42  
representing the closing balance of the account;  
by Steve Wykes, on behalf of Edinburgh & District: £400.00.

Prior to the Chairman's closing address, a number of fundraising events and rallies were mentioned, and a suggestion made to raise the membership subscription from £25.00 to £30.00. This matter to be raised at the August NC meeting.

#### 10. National Chairman's closing address

Paul proffered "huge thanks to all MAG members", not just those at AGC; to the Board of Directors; and to the staff at Central Office. He further thanked Conference for their input at a Conference that had proved "fraught at times" but ably demonstrated the democratic process.

#### 11. AGC 2012

It was announced that proposals for hosting AGC 2012 should be submitted to NC by August NC meeting.

Conference closes.

Minutes taken by Jane Carrott, 72474, Secretary Mid Lincs Branch.