

Minutes

of the

Motorcycle Action Group

Annual Group Conference

April 11, 2015

1. Opening: *John Mitchell*

John thanked all for attending and handed over to Neil Liversidge. He, in turn, thanked the organisers, noted that MAG is very active in the run-up to the General Election and handed over to Leon Mannings and Lembit Öpik for a review of campaign activity.

2. Review of 2014/15 campaign activity: *Dr. Leon Mannings and Lembit Öpik*

Lembit opened the review by stating that it had been "an amazing last four months" and by introducing MAG's new "legal eagle" Cheryl Rowlands. He went on to remind Conference of what MAG is all about, highlighted a quote from 1973 (MAG's inaugural year) that included the words "representation" and "enlightenment" and said that this was as relevant now as then.

He went on to explain that in the run-up to the General Election it is important to engage with political parties and with policy-makers.

He further noted that MAG is the leading riders' rights organisation; that the number of members who are MPs has increased from 3 to 44; that there have been a record number of election debates and that The ROAD is an important campaigning tool. MAG is getting regular media coverage but ideally it would be from "many voices" over all regions.

The number of office staff has been increased by taking on Cheryl, and also an administrative assistant, Alex Purton. Both are volunteers.

Before handing over to Leon, Lembit also touched on MAG's involvement with two inquests following the deaths of motorcyclists in accidents.

Leon then spoke about work in respect to Bikes in Buslanes, Transport for London stating that they will not research the potential for getting people out of cars, vans, etc., and onto PTW, and stated that we have to achieve recognition of PTWs as part of the congestion solution.

He continued by talking about Ultra-Low Emissions Zones (ULEZ), which are designed to improve air quality in cities. However the solution being posited is to charge non-compliant vehicles for entering an ULEZ, and PTWs will be charged the same as cars.

Lembit then reported a successful NEC Bike Show, where the industry was engaging with MAG. MAG is finding allies that can generate income and dealers are increasingly happy to look at developing mutually beneficial relationships with us.

Before handing over to Leon, Lembit reiterated that The ROAD is a very useful campaigning tool and that they are focussing on the Election.

Leon spoke about PACTS, which advises parliament and is very influential. He stated that, following a suggestion about banning motorcycles, it had been pointed out to them that the KSI statistics are almost identical for motorcycles and cycles and that perhaps any such ban should be extended to include cycles.

He further stated that the use of "armadillos" in Manchester constituted unreasonable restriction and noted that the NoToMob have ensured that many thousands of pounds in fines have been returned to people caught by mobile CCTV.

He went on to discuss road safety audits, stating that they need to change because dangerous road schemes are being passed with no reference to PTWs; however, there is now some support for change within TfL and DfT.

Leon then reported some good news regarding the Deregulation Bill, where an anti-biking contingency had tried to prevent the activity of trail riding. Lembit organised a meeting with the Trail Riders Fellowship and it was possible to get the relevant section of the Bill removed.

Lembit reminded Conference about the song "It Means So Much" that had been released last year, and admitted that this had not worked out as well as anticipated; however we still

have some gigs to "cash in" and this along with connections with another band may yet generate some revenue.

He then went on to explain that he and Leon are currently focussed on the General Election, developing useful links and working with the parties that are most likely to become part of the Government. He said it is a good time to encourage MPs to join MAG as they are keen to garner votes. He stressed that MAG is not party political, but will work with any individual or party that will support MAG.

Leon said that a great deal of planning is very pro-cycling but doesn't include PTW. Also MAG is developing better links with the MCIA.

He said that the Shadow Transport Minister has described the country as "Pothole Britain" and that he is positive about transport in general, which may prove significant. He further stated that the issue of potholes will develop and that there is the potential for financial assistance.

Finally, mention was made regarding Nigel Farage joining MAG. MAG was the first organisation that ever invited him to speak and he has remembered this. It was noted that UKIP agree with Libertarian values.

In closing, Conference was informed that we need to increase membership and to "think big". Leon & Lembit stated that they are "at your service" and that "next year starts now".

3. FEMA report: Neil Liversidge (NFL)

The report was circulated.

Tony Nightingale noted that the report was thorough, that he was sad to see Christina made redundant and proposed a letter of thanks to be sent. NFL confirmed that will be covered later in the year at a leaving event.

In response to a question from Andy Carrott regarding the number of member organisations that FEMA currently has, NFL confirmed that the majority of organisations are still on board.

Gareth Hiscocks asked if there is a way of encouraging other organisations to give or increase support. NFL said that the way to achieve this is by being supportive and making friends via word of mouth.

4. The MAG Foundation report

It was noted that Paul Turner was unable to attend.

Ian Williamson asked whether, in the light of no progress being made during the last year, the Foundation is "moribund".

NFL asked whether the Foundation should be wound up.

Following a brief discussion, no decision was made regarding the way forward.

5. Board report

The report has been circulated.

NFL clarified that MAG Media and Nice Employer Ltd report to the Board; he further clarified the administrative motions relating to TMAGL (The Motorcycle Action Group Limited).

In response to a question from Tim Peregrine regarding progress on the new website, it was explained that Tony Cox is working with Lembit and Andy Meredith to progress this. Tony Cox reported that the website has been built, but that content has yet to be added and this will be on hold until after the General Election.

Geoff Mills noted that membership figures have decreased by approximately 1000 over the past year. NFL said that this matter is covered under the membership persistency section of the Board report and that it requires the maximum number of members to encourage and advertise to prospective members.

Alan Langmaid suggested that there was a connection between the loss of members and last year's employment issues and asked if NFL would, in light of this, resign his position as Director.

NFL stated that the employees in question were not working in the best interests of the organisation and that it is a matter of record that this was the case. He further reported that the matter reached the stage where significant funds were being withheld by Yorkshire region and that he had been asked to stand as a Director. NFL said that he believed that Alan's request was made in good faith but that he has been misinformed. He had been elected in a free and fair election last year. In wrapping up this matter he stated that "a general does not have the prerogative of resigning on the field of battle" and that he would continue to work in the best interests of MAG.

Alec Groom (Bristol rep) asked about the potential change to the format and frequency of The ROAD. It was confirmed that this had been looked at but no changes made at this time. Mike Baker noted that the costs of a comparable magazine are likely to be greater and John Mitchell stated that MAG currently has a good deal in respect to printing costs.

Rick Hulse suggested looking at whether there would be an appetite for an electronic version of the magazine to help reduce costs. NFL noted a reduction in numbers would not significantly reduce costs and that moving to an electronic magazine was likely to devalue it, although nothing was being ruled out, and that Lembit has reported that it is a useful campaign tool.

Following a suggestion from the Floor that The ROAD could be provided in a pdf format, John Mitchell noted that MAG Media is currently looking for Directors!

6. Finance report

The report was circulated.

In response to a question from Roger Ford, Neil Liversidge confirmed that there should have been a balance sheet available and that anyone wishing to see it can have it emailed to them.

7. Questions to the Board

Covered under item 5 above.

8. National Committee report

The report was circulated.

9. Questions to the National Committee

None.

10. Administrative Motions

This AGM accepts the Board report

Proposed: Oliver Rose; Seconded: Andy Carrott. Carried unanimously.

This AGM accepts the Finance report

Proposed: Paul Dore; Seconded: Deb Rose. Carried unanimously.

This AGM accepts the NC report

Proposed: Jim Coxon; Seconded: Steve Wykes. Carried unanimously.

11. Constitutional and Policy motions

Motion:

Amend the Constitution to include the following as Clause 1 renumbering all subsequent clauses:

1 Statement of Principles

i. MAG is a civil rights organisation working to influence political decision making and social attitudes for the benefit of motorcyclists and motorcycling.

ii. MAG exists to promote motorcycling in all its forms.

iii. MAG's primary consideration will always be that which it believes to be in the best interests of motorcyclists and motorcycling.

iv. MAG believes in the right of motorcyclists to enjoy their lifestyle without undue interference, unhampered by unreasonable and intrusive legislation and regulation.

v. MAG believes in equal opportunities and guarantees, through its Constitution, the fair and equal treatment of all its Members regardless of race, gender, creed, colour or other distinction.

vi. MAG shall run its affairs in an open and democratic fashion and shall seek to preserve and enhance the democratic freedoms of the society of which it is a part by encouraging the participation of all citizens in the political process at a local, national and international level.

vii. MAG believes in personal responsibility, that each individual has a responsibility to conduct himself or herself in such a fashion as not to endanger the personal property or well-being of others.

viii. MAG believes in meeting its obligations to society, paying its fair share of taxes, treating its employees fairly and seeking to play a beneficial role in society.

ix. MAG is a consumers' organisation which seeks to ensure that motorcyclists are treated fairly when they interact with suppliers of goods and services.

x. MAG believes that there should exist the best obtainable free, competitive, efficient and transparent market in goods and services relevant to motorcyclists as can be achieved in a democratic society.

xi. MAG believes a healthy motorcycle manufacturing and retail sector is essential so that motorcyclists benefit from the technological advancement, value-for-money and enhanced services that should result from a free, transparent and competitive market.

xii. MAG, in line with the Mulhouse Declaration of 1999, opposes the compulsory fitment to privately owned vehicles of any device designed to arbitrarily remove control from the driver to remote operation and opposes also the tendency of governments to impose ever more intrusive and restrictive regulations upon the citizen. MAG cautions all governments to remember that they are permitted to govern only by the consent of the people, that such consent when given through an election does not grant unlimited licence to interfere in the daily life of the citizen, and that to impose unduly on popular freedom is to imperil the respect in which all government and the rule of law is held.

Proposed: Ian Mutch Membership no. 3

Seconded: John Mitchell Membership no. 10564

NFL noted that Lembit had commented that this is a very good statement to have and makes clear what MAG stands for and how the organisation should behave.

Ian Mutch reads out the entire clause.

Gareth Hiscocks stated that he felt that two words had been missed out: "scooters" and "scooterists" and requested that they be included. He supported the motion.

Andy Whitworth suggested using the phrase powered two wheelers (PTW) and also supported the motion.

A member who is a scooterist stated that using terminology that acknowledged scooterists was something that would be appreciated by the scootering community, which supports MAG.

Geoff queried the use of the word "arbitrarily" in sub-clause xii. NFL explained that this sub-clause is a direct quote from the Mulholland Directive, to which many organisations had signed up and would therefore have to stand.

Tim Peregrine suggested wording that included reference to motorcycles, scooters and trikes.

Andy Carrott proposed an amendment to sub-clause ii that would add "including scooters and three-wheeled motorcycles and trikes" after the word "forms".

NFL suggested an amendment whereby the word "motorcyclists" is replaced by "PTW riders" and the word "motorcycles" is replaced by "PTWs".

Andy Carrott pointed out that three-wheeled vehicles included motorcycle-and-sidecar outfits as well as trikes.

Martin Wylie (Spam) suggested an explanatory note at the beginning of the clause and moved this as an amendment.

Phil McFadden wondered whether the two statements could be merged.

NFL moved to a vote on the two amendments, before a vote on the substantive motion.

Both amendments were carried. The full clause was also carried, with one vote against.

NFL noted that a second Motion regarding the creation of a separate charitable membership status had been missed off the Agenda and read the Motion to Conference in full, before requesting that a vote be taken on whether to discuss this Motion or not.

To debate the Motion regarding the creation of a separate charitable membership status.

The vote was counted by tellers with the following result:

For: 36; Against: 55. Motion falls.

12. Elections

NFL explained the election process and noted that the following officers were returned unopposed:

Selina Lavender to the post of Director.

Tony Cox to the post of Director.

Steve Wykes to the post of Director.

Oliver Rose to the post of National Clubs Liaison Officer.

Anne Gale to the post of National Network Communications Officer.

Jane Carrott to the post of National Reps Liaison Officer.

There were two candidates for the position of Chair, Selina Lavender and John Mitchell. Each candidate was allotted 10 minutes to address the Conference, followed by 10 minutes

for Q&A. The decision regarding who should speak first was decided on the toss of a coin.

Selina spoke briefly, stating that she has had the privilege of supporting John over the last year, whilst in the post of Vice Chair. She said that her approach to the role of Chair would be different and invited questions.

In response to questions regarding how to build and motivate the membership, Selina said that active members need to be given the tools that they need to do this and that this would include a package of information (that can be provided electronically or as hard copy) and cover things like Frequently Asked Questions.

In response to a question from Mike Baker, Selina confirmed that reinstating training sessions is something that all of the Board wish to see and that this will be addressed following the General Election.

Rick Hulse asked whether she would continue as Vice Chair if not elected to the post of Chair. Selina explained that the Vice Chair is chosen by the Chair and that, if asked, she would "certainly consider it". In response to another question regarding the difference between the two roles, she stated that the Vice Chair supports the Chair, who takes the lead.

The Reading Rep (Peter Seymour) asked whether the role of Chair could be split, but the question was disallowed as it would be a Constitutional matter.

In response to a question regarding campaigns, Selina stated that MAG should continue with the current campaigns going forward and that the organisation has to "pick its fights".

John Mitchell then addressed the Conference, noting that he took on the role two years ago at a difficult time for MAG. He stated that he had taken the lead on a number of issues, including 3DLD, licencing, motorcycle tests and demonstrations. Acknowledging the support of the Vice Chair, he noted further examples, including the Forth Bridge and ULEZ, and also started the Justice Campaign, after talking with a family known to him that have experienced a loss.

He said that MAG is "getting noticed more than ever", that he has worked well with Selina and has no problem with her standing for Chair, but is happy to continue in the role of Chair.

Alec Groom asked whether any significant personal contacts would suffer due to a change in Chair and John stated that contact with the Sentencing Council may need to be rebuilt.

In response to a question from Greg Phillipson, John confirmed that he would continue his activist work whether re-elected or not.

Alec Groom asked whether John was tired and he responded "no, and I'm not tired of the role".

In response to questions regarding membership communication, John stated that this is improving and that delegation is an important part of the role and is also improving.

Rick Hulse asked whether John would be prepared to take on the role of Vice Chair and he confirmed that he would. He also confirmed that MAG should be fighting the Justice Campaign.

NFL then called for a vote, requesting a show of hands first of all for Selina and then for John. Following consultation with both parties, no vote with tellers was requested and the vote accepted.

Selina Lavender was duly returned as the new Chair of MAG.

13. Any other business

NFL invited Ian Williamson, South Wales Regional Rep, to address the Conference regarding innovative ideas being practised in furthering the cause of motorcycling.

Ian opened his remarks by stating that "we do things differently in South Wales" and went on to outline some of the things that are being done. Examples included having representation on all local councils and being a "go to" resource for the Police, Highways, etc.

They have challenged Local Authority officers regarding their understanding of motorcycling and have even sponsored some officers through motorcycle training. This results in a better understanding of motorcycling and motorcyclists and improves the dialogue.

As a result of the efforts being made by MAG in South Wales, the organisation is "sitting at the table" with the emergency services, highways authorities, etc., and some funding has been agreed for improving the motorcycling experience.

The region also has links with cyclists, equestrians, etc., and has obtained funding from the Lottery Commission. Ian exhorted all to "go out and engage with bikers" and noted that all of these examples can be achieved.

In response to a question regarding "being let in", Ian stated that it can take time and effort to get recognised, invited and accepted, and that the key is engaging with and educating the relevant personnel.

Tim Peregrine noted that it had taken 4-5 years to get onto a local road safety committee, but that, with perseverance, it can be achieved.

Ian closed his presentation by saying that "we have to have a positive outlook, and play their game".

NFL thanked Ian for his presentation and stated that "we are going to grow the organisation".

To formally thank the South West Region for hosting MAG's 42nd Annual Conference.

Proposed: Neil Liversidge; Seconded: John Mitchell. Applause from the Floor.

Awards and acknowledgements

Certificates of Merit

Presented by Selina Lavender to Tracy Smith.

Presented by Paul Dore to Alex Pease.

Presented by Paul Dore to 'Joe' Mark Greening.

Ron Gibson/Youthbike Award

NFL invited Tony Nightingale, Youthbike organiser, to speak. Tony explained that they had a trophy commissioned following the death of stalwart Youthbike supporter Dr. Ron Gibson to recognise outstanding support of the event. He noted that Mid Lincs MAG began the event 20 years ago in response to the lack of young people coming into motorcycling and that, to date, approximately 4.5 thousand youngsters and their families have been introduced to it.

Presented by Tony Nightingale to MAG; accepted by John Mitchell on behalf of MAG.

Chairman's Award

Presented by John Mitchell to Pete Walker. Accepted on Pete's behalf by Andy Foody.

Media Award

Presented by Selina Lavender to Sarah Robinson of the Whitehaven News for regular coverage of motorcycling events.

The Steve Tannock Award

Presented by Selina Lavender to Salford MAG, received by 'Blayz' Steve Blay.

The Richard Tegg Award

Ian Mutch spoke briefly about Richard before BSE MAG Rep Jo Streeton presented the award to Simon Mollett (posthumously), Martin Chapman accepted the award.

Bald Eagle Award

Inaugurated in memory of Ian Philips.

Presented by Tony Cox to Yorkshire MAG, received by Oliver Rose.

The Simon Millward Lifetime Achievement Award

Presented by Ian Williamson to Phil McFadden.

Honorary Life Membership

Presented by George Legg (on behalf of Anne Gale) to Claire Bryant.

The Fred Hill Freedom Award

Ian Mutch illustrated Fred's commitment to the cause with several anecdotes before presenting the award to Andy Meredith.

Donations

MAG Scotland	£275
South Wales MAG	£500
South East MAG	£500
South West MAG (AGC)	£620
Cornwall MAG	£1,000
Leeds MAG	£1,000
Bury St Edmunds MAG	£1,500
North West MAG	£2,000
Peterborough MAG	£2,050
North East MAG	£65,000
Yorkshire MAG	£71,000

President's address - Ian Mutch

Ian opened his remarks by thanking South West Region for hosting AGC 2015. He then observed that it has become a tradition to "take the mickey out of my navigation skills" and noted that Phil McFadden's colourful beard had attracted attention "even in Glastonbury"!

He then went on to say that if MAG could generate the same level of support from bikers that the organisation is currently getting from MPs, "that would be great".

He said that the BMF used to say that "certain doors would always remain closed to MAG" but that now we have Leon with a Doctorate in Transport and Lembit, a former MP, on

board as MAG's Transport Policy Advisor and Director of Communications & Public Affairs, noting that "it is only matter of time before we take over the country"!!

He then referenced CS Forster's book *The Machine Stops*, in which risk is removed from people's lives to the detriment of quality of life, stating that we need to "get more people in power who share our outlook".

National Chairman's Closing Remarks - John Mitchell

John opened his remarks by noting that NABD and National Youthbike are traditionally awarded free affiliation to MAG at the annual conference.

To award free affiliation to MAG for NABD and National Youthbike.

Proposed: John Mitchell; Seconded: Gareth Lewis. Carried unanimously.

John then thanked both organisations for their hard work in relation to motorcycling.

He thanked everyone for attending, said that it had "been a blast" and that the organisation will be in safe hands with Selina.

Finally he thanked the organisers of AGC 2015, NFL for chairing the meeting and Leon & Lembit for their tireless work on campaigns.

Conference closes.

Minutes taken by Jane Carrott, 72474, Secretary Mid Lincs Branch, National Reps' Liaison Officer.

NOTE: Finalised on Wednesday 12th August 2015 by Selina Lavender, MAG Chair