

A MANIFESTO FOR UK MOTOR SPORT

BACKGROUND

The UK leads the world in motor sport, both in terms of the sport itself and the industry that the sport underpins. UK motor sport and the industry supports approximately 4,500 SME companies, employing 38,000 people in full and part-time jobs, and delivering an annual turnover of £6 billion, of which 60% is exported. Yet, while the UK motor sport industry enjoys international profile, one must not overlook the development of the domestic sport that sustains it. In simple terms, if we can grow the sport, we will grow the associated industry.

THE MOTOR SPORTS ASSOCIATION

The Motor Sports Association (MSA) is the National Governing Body (NGB) of all four-wheeled motor sport in the United Kingdom. With 750 member clubs boasting a membership of some 200,000 people, 15,000 registered and highly-trained volunteers and 5,000 officially sanctioned events every year, the MSA is driving the development of the sport from grass roots level right through to Formula 1 and the British Grand Prix.

The MSA has an annual turnover of £8m, funded entirely by fees from its membership, delivering annual profits of around £500,000, but re-invests approximately £1m per year in the development of the sport through its Whole Sport Plan, which also incorporates educational initiatives for the 2,000 licence holders aged under 16.

THE MSA'S PROPOSAL TO AN INCOMING GOVERNMENT

The Motor Sports Association would like to discuss three key issues with Westminster after the forthcoming General Election. They all relate directly to enabling local communities to benefit from motor sport and the jobs, investment, tourism and environmental advantage that it can bring to these areas.

1. HOW MOTOR SPORT CAN DELIVER MILLIONS OF POUNDS TO LOCAL COMMUNITIES

The UK is losing out both in sporting and economic terms as a direct result of the law that requires an Act of Parliament to suspend the Road Traffic Act on a stretch of the public highway. Throughout Europe (and also in Northern Ireland and the Isle of Man), 'closed road' events bring great benefit to the local communities in terms of tourism, economic prosperity and sporting kudos.

Providing a mechanism to deliver a Temporary Suspension Order (in association with local authorities) would enable a limited annual number of 'closed road' events to take place in England, Wales and Scotland, with the associated benefits for the regions selected, particularly in the low season.

The Motor Sports Association is currently undertaking an economic impact assessment to support this proposal. Previous studies undertaken on behalf of the Jim Clark Rally and other similar events, lead the MSA to estimate that closing roads for a limited number of approximately 20 events a year could deliver millions of pounds worth of financial benefit to local areas.

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2. THE INCREASING PROBLEMS CREATED BY PLANNING LAWS

The Motor Sports Association's members, specifically clubs and venues, are alarmed by an increasingly vocal minority who have started to take legal recourse to prevent the continued running of officially designated and controlled motor sport events.

Using the legislative powers under the *Tort of Nuisance*, local residents are threatening to further restrict the use of designated motor sport venues. This threatens the commercial viability of these venues and by extension the wider motor sport industry that underpins the UK's world-leading high-performance engineering sector.

In 2009, Croft Circuit – established for more than 50 years in the North East – lost a case brought by a disaffected local resident. Whilst not having the support of the local community, the resident was successful and as a result Croft, despite having operated at all times within the terms of its planning permission, has had to drastically reduce its activity. The inevitable negative knock-on effect has been a reduction in the numbers of local people employed, a decrease in the economic benefit to the area through the use of local hotels, restaurants and suppliers, and the loss of a leisure amenity not only to participants but also to volunteer officials, spectators and locals.

The experience of the governing body for motorcycle sport, the Auto-Cycle Union (ACU), demonstrates that where adequate facilities do not exist for organised motor sport, riders will conduct illegal and un-regulated activity that causes far greater disturbance and inconvenience for the local community.

A number of similar situations are nearing the courts and the MSA would be pleased to work closely with government to provide clear guidance for the courts in similar circumstances, while acknowledging that this is not an issue limited in its impact to the motor sport community.

3. HOW MOTORSPORT CAN PILOT NEW ENVIRONMENTAL AUTOMOTIVE OPPORTUNITIES

The Motor Sports Association is committed to addressing the environmental issues that may be perceived to have a negative impact on the sport. In recent years, the MSA has amended its regulations to allow the use of alternative fuels in its events and has conducted a number of evaluations into the benefits of adopting more sustainable regulations.

The MSA would be pleased to work with government and the automotive industry to pilot new initiatives and explore new opportunities to bring forward environmental benefits.

Such initiatives could include the use of alternative energies, low-impact tyres on gravel roads, limits on the number of tyres permitted for use in competition, reductions in acceptable noise levels and the promotion of economy runs.

The MSA believes that motor sport can take a pro-active lead in bringing forward the introduction of environmental technologies and assist their acceptance by demonstrating their potential in a competitive context.

FURTHER INFORMATION

To download the complete **Motorsport Alliance manifesto**, please visit click [here](#)

To download a **draft letter** to send to your local MP, please click [here](#)

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