

Minutes of the 28th MAG Annual Group Conference held at Benn Hall, Rugby, Saturday 27th October 2001 Morning Session

Formal Opening

Mayor of Rugby Ray Kirby opened the conference at 11.20am.

National Chairman's Welcome

Neil Liversidge, National Chairman explained how the Hells Angels business was now finished with, how MAG as an organisation was stronger and its events safer. He expressed his gratitude that so many Members had turned-up to AGC.

Officers' Reports / Questions to National Officers

No questions were forthcoming to any officer.

Finance Report / Questions to the National Finance Director

Julie Stevenson (Finance Director) gave a detailed presentation of the 2000 – 2001 annual accounts although warned that the final version have yet to be submitted to Companies House and may be subject to minor amendment. Salient points:

- The MAG Stall now runs the MAG products operation as a separate company.
- A separate company, MAG Media Ltd, now produces StreetBiker.
- A Finance Working Group has been convened and created a 3-year rolling replacement-maintenance program for office computers and software.
- A full audit trail has been completed.

Ian Phillips, Northwest Region asked various questions on year-on-year changes to account fields, all satisfactorily answered by the Finance Director.

Election of Officers

AGC was notified that only the existing officers had been nominated for the positions up for election. AGC was therefore asked to endorse their return en bloc. A proposal to deal with endorsements individually was defeated by 67 votes to 61.

All National Officers were endorsed en bloc, namely -
Neil F. Liversidge - National Chairman
National Finance Officer - Julie Stevenson
National Representatives Liaison Officer - Nicky Bassett-Powell
National Clubs Liaison Officer - Debbie Jones

Election of Directors to the Board of MAG (UK) Limited

Gary Barnes and Julie Stevenson were overwhelmingly re-elected with 1 abstention for a term ending at the AGC in 2005.

Appointment of Auditors

Stanley Yule & Co of Birmingham were unanimously approved by AGC for re-appointment as MAG's auditors.

Advance Proposal, Learner Car Drivers. Proposer: Roy Hills, Southwest RR

'That a learner car driver, should have to take 6mths practical experience of riding a motorcycle or moped after passing the qualifying CBT, before being eligible to take the car practical test to get a full car license.'

Amendment by Ian Sutherland, Reading:

That training include CBT for car drivers and that moped licences be available at 14. (*Accepted by Proposer*)

Motion and amendment defeated overwhelmingly.

Late Proposals

(NB: Late Proposals are proposals received after the deadline for submissions but still received in time for circulation to the Membership via StreetBiker and/or Network, thus ensuring that the Membership is aware of all important issues to be formally discussed at conference. Late proposals must also be first cleared by the NC for submission to the AGC. Clearance will usually only be given where a matter has arisen since the closing date for proposals, or where the subject matter is relatively non-contentious, or where the intent of the resolution is viewed by the NC as being overwhelmingly in MAG's interests.)

Late Proposal 1, Regional AGMs. Proposer: Neil Liversidge

That from 1st January 2002:

1. Regions shall be required to notify their Regional AGMs to all Members by post;
2. Central Office shall supply sticky labels for the mailing showing details of current Members as at the date of request.
3. The non-inclusion of Members joining after the date the label run was produced shall not invalidate the proceedings and neither shall any other genuinely accidental failure to notify any Member.
4. Central funds shall be made available for the said mailing where the region is genuinely impoverished, subject to the National Finance Director's approval;
5. The National Chairman shall assist any Regional Rep on request with the wording of any letter of notification, which shall be aimed at securing maximum attendance and participation by Members thereafter in MAG activities;
6. Regions shall supply a draft agenda for said meeting to the regional Membership along with notice of any proposals and / or nominations received by the date of the posting;
7. Not less than 14 days notice be given of such meetings;
8. Not more than 15 months shall elapse between Regional AGMs and should no AGM be convened within that time the Regional Rep's term of office shall cease, with the National Network Director (Reps Liaison Officer) convening a Regional AGM in conjunction with local reps;
9. Regional AGMs be notified to the NC at least four weeks prior so as to enable an observer to be appointed;
10. That the National Chairman be instructed to update the Model Rules for Regions accordingly and distribute the same via Network in due course.'

NC amendment:

To re-word part 5:

'The NC shall assist any Regional Rep'. *(Accepted by Proposer)*

Amendment by Derwen Hinds, Gloucester:

To amend part 2 to state that:

'Central Office shall supply sticky labels for the mailing showing details of Members current as at one month prior to the date of the AGM.' *(Accepted by Proposer)*.

Amendment by Derwen Hinds, Gloucester:

To amend clause 6 to state that:

'Regions shall supply a draft agenda for said meeting to the regional Membership along with notice of any proposals and / or nominations received by the date of the posting. Regions shall include a single sheet newsletter with the mailing'. *(Accepted by Proposer)*.

Amendment by Trevor Fleming, Northwest RR:

Delete all words after AGMs in clause 8. *(Not accepted by Proposer)*.

(Vote on this amendment: This amendment was overwhelmingly defeated.)

Amendment by Mark Rutherford, Northeast MAG:

To amend part 3 to read:

‘The non-inclusion of Members joining after the date the label run was produced shall not invalidate the proceedings and neither shall any other genuinely accidental failure to notify any Member, subject to ratification by the NC observer on the day.’ *(Accepted by proposer).*

After the acceptance of friendly amendments and the defeat of the amendment rejected by the Proposer the substantive resolution carried overwhelmingly by Conference (3 against) read as follows:

That from 1st January 2002:

1. Regions shall be required to notify their Regional AGMs to all Members by post;
2. Central Office shall supply sticky labels for the mailing showing details of Members current as at one month prior to the date of the AGM.
3. The non-inclusion of Members joining after the date the label run was produced shall not invalidate the proceedings and neither shall any other genuinely accidental failure to notify any Member, subject to ratification by the NC observer on the day.
4. Central funds shall be made available for the said mailing where the region is genuinely impoverished, subject to the National Finance Director's approval;
5. Assistance shall be given by the NC to any Regional Rep on request with the wording of any letter of notification, which shall be aimed at securing maximum attendance and participation by Members thereafter in MAG activities;
6. Regions shall supply a draft agenda for said meeting to the regional Membership along with notice of any proposals and / or nominations received by the date of the posting. Regions shall include a single sheet newsletter with the mailing;
7. Not less than 14 days notice be given of such meetings;
8. Not more than 15 months shall elapse between Regional AGMs and should no AGM be convened within that time the Regional Rep's term of office shall cease, with the National Network Director (Reps Liaison Officer) convening a Regional AGM in conjunction with local reps;
9. Regional AGMs be notified to the NC at least four weeks prior so as to enable an observer to be appointed;
10. That the National Chairman be instructed to update the Model Rules for Regions accordingly and distribute the same via Network in due course.

Carried overwhelmingly (3 against).

Late Proposal 2, Anti-Corruption. Proposer: Neil Liversidge

'That any MAG Member involved in running any MAG event or enterprise of any description who pays any form of bribe to any person either in cash or in kind or who authorises payment of the same by others or causes it to be paid in any way whatsoever shall be liable to be expelled from MAG and shall be reported to the police for prosecution. This shall not be interpreted so as to prevent expressions of gratitude or donations for good will purposes to bona fide individuals or organisations in the locality but shall specifically prevent the giving of free tickets, free entry, food, drink or other benefits or facilities to persons or groups of persons aimed at securing from them the good behaviour that MAG is entitled in any case to expect from attendees at MAG events. This resolution recognises that such bribery is a misuse of MAG Members' assets and moreover endangers individual Members, attendees at events and MAG as a whole by creating the false impression that violent individuals and/or organisations can extort MAG. For the avoidance of all doubt and the protection of those involved in the running of events any person wishing to make a good will payment or allowance of any kind shall obtain prior clearance from the MAG National Committee.'

Amendment by Reading MAG (worded on their behalf by Neil Liversidge and wording formally accepted by Reading, also accepted by Neil Liversidge as a friendly amendment).

Delete all after ‘...extort MAG.’ and replace with the following wording:

‘For the avoidance of all doubt, any person shall be assumed to have acted correctly unless the spirit of the rule has been breached’.

Amendment by Mark Rutherford: T

To replace 'shall be reported to the police for prosecution' with 'may be reported to the police for prosecution'.

(Accepted by Proposer.)

Carried overwhelmingly (6 against).

(NB: A statement was made that MAG had received 'thousands of Pounds' in donations from the Hells Angels MC. MAG National Chairman Neil F. Liversidge stated that the only cash donation he could ever recall was one of £50 by in 1990 at the Kent Custom Show. This was made by an individual member of HAMC and received at the MAG stand. The donation followed his (NFL's) speech to the crowd. The National Chairman stated however that if anyone else could advise of any other cash donations that had been made by HAMC, to whom and when, then he would be glad to ask the NC to include the same in the written record. Up to the time of these minutes being issued (6th November 2001) no such details have been received. If any are received this record will be updated once the NC is satisfied as to the veracity of the claim)

Late Proposal 3, AGC Organisation. Proposer: Neil Liversidge

That Clause 4 Part xv of the MAG Constitution be amended from:

'MAG Regional Groups willing and able to host the conference shall submit proposals to the National Committee as to the facilities they intend to provide by the November 30th preceding the AGC due to be held in the following September. Regions wishing to bid for the conference must submit a full plan and budget to the NC Regions should be able to meet a significant part of the cost of the conference from monies raised by their own regional activities.'

To:

'MAG Regional Groups willing and able to host the annual conference shall submit their proposals to the National Committee. The NC shall set an appropriate deadline for such submissions. Regions wishing to bid for the conference must submit a full plan and budget to the NC Regions should be able to meet a significant part of the cost of the conference from monies raised by their own regional activities.'

Carried Unanimously

Late Proposal 4, Nominations. Proposer: Neil Liversidge

That Clause 5 Parts ii and iii of the MAG Constitution be amended to cope with the date shift of the AGC next year from:

5 ii. 'Nominations for officers to be elected by the Annual Group Conference shall open on June 1st each year and shall close on July 1st. Following closure of nominations each candidate shall receive immediate notice of the names of all other candidates, together with a copy of their election manifestos.'

5 iii. 'Details of all nominations and proposals received by the cut off date shall be printed in the August/September issue of the group's newspaper immediately preceding the conference and all candidates shall be obliged to submit a manifesto for printing in this issue with their nomination. Failure by any candidate to submit a manifesto shall invalidate their nomination.'

To:

5 ii 'Nominations for officers to be elected by the Annual Group Conference shall open on January 1st each year and shall close on February 1st. Following closure of nominations each candidate shall receive immediate notice of the names of all other candidates, together with a copy of their election manifestos.'

5 iii 'Details of all nominations and proposals received by the cut off date shall be printed in the February/March issue of the group's newspaper and all candidates shall be obliged to submit a manifesto for printing in this issue with their nomination. Failure by any candidate to submit a manifesto shall invalidate their nomination.'

Carried Unanimously

Late Proposal 5, Bull Bars. Proposer: Neil Liversidge

‘MAG opposes the fitment of so called ‘bull bars’ to motor vehicles used on public roads and calls on legislators to effect appropriate legislation banning their use.’

Carried Overwhelmingly (4 against).

Late Proposal 6, MAG Presidency. Proposer: Neil Liversidge

‘That following the sad death of Dennis Howard the Presidency remain vacant until April 2002 as a mark of respect.

Carried Unanimously

There followed one minute’s silence as a mark of respect to Dennis Howard

Late Proposal 7, MAG Lobbying Activities. Proposer: Neil Liversidge

That Constitution 8.x.11.d be amended from:

‘The lobbying of MPs, MEPs, MSPs, Welsh AMs, councillors, officials, public and other bodies on matters of concern to motorcyclists’

To:

‘Lobbying on matters of concern to motorcyclists.’

Carried Unanimously

NABD AFFILIATION

It was unanimously agreed to renew the affiliation of NABD.

Liz Needham, South Herts asked that MAG support the Scottish Association for Bikers with Disability by granting them a free affiliation. Neil Liversidge offered however to write to SABD to discuss a free affiliation and the AGC indicated its agreement with this course of action.

Owen Kristiansen, Member No. 2 voiced his confidence in the National Committee, the sentiment that StreetBiker was now better than MCN, and how wonderful it was to see groups here from as far afield as Barnsley, St Austell and Middlesbrough. He summed up by calling for Members to continue to raise the helmet issue with their MPs as we should remember that this was the reason MAG was formed!

Volunteers Julie, Janet and Jackie thanked for their kind efforts in producing additional food.

AGC 2002 advance notification was circulated for the 2002 at the Winter Gardens, Weston-super-Mare. Noted that proposals and nominations should be submitted before 1st February 2001.

Conference adjourned for lunch at 13.30hrs.

Afternoon Session

Conference reconvened at 14.30hrs

Henry Marks gave an overview of MAG’s administration as MAG Central Office tends to be wrongly identified as the source of decisions actually made by the National Committee, when it is in fact an administration centre charged with the implementation of NC decisions. Henry explained that MAG Central consists of 3 full-time administration staff work alongside Henry Marks and Phil Neale in Rugby, with Ian Mutch working from his home in London. Essentially MAG’s paid staff equate to the Civil Service in UK government terms whilst the NC is the actual governing body of the group.

Henry also explained that his Board role was that of company secretary of MAG (UK) Limited and that he was not a voting member of either the Board or NC. Henry explained some of the issues in which the office is involved and how the office fulfils its primary function, as well as providing general assistance to the Membership on a diverse range of matters.

Liz Needham, S Herts asked why her membership had been automatically backdated to the date of expiry when she renewed it.

It was explained that a previous AGC had decided that renewals should run consecutively from the time of expiry unless a Member specifically requested a new membership number, in which case the new membership would run from the date of payment. The Members were reminded that payment by standing order is an effective way to ensure that renewal is not overlooked.

Sid (?) N East London asked Henry which organisation, MAG or BMF, was the better in his experience, he having worked for both?

Henry stated that everyone associated with both groups points to MAG as being far more effective and successful than BMF, though MAG still suffers a certain stigma / image problem. This is being overcome however as the growth in the number of corporate Members illustrates. Henry made particular mention of StreetBiker as being the best motorcycling publication available.

He also stated that on lobbying MAG is far better supported by its Membership than the BMF and that MAG spends a far greater proportion of its income on lobbying. The benefit of this had become particularly apparent during his visit (with Phil Neale) to Brussels the previous month where all the MEPs and European civil servants visited were well aware and respectful of MAG UK.

Simon O'Connor, Harlow asked if MAG is so effective, why has Membership fallen?

Henry stated that research showed that many people simply left motorcycling after a short flirtation with it as a pastime. It was stressed that MAG activists need to promote the organisation more at ground level. Personal contact is essential.

Simon O'Connor, Harlow asked why MAG was not making more effort to recruit a larger proportion of sports bike riders.

Henry explained that whilst we had targeted this group for recruitment, the response had been poor. Neil Liversidge said he was aware of this need and had plans afoot for an image makeover. .

Member (name unknown) of Bristol MAG asked why MAG cannot get featured on Granada Men and Motors?

Ian Mutch answered that the real point is why MAG is not better at PR? PR work effectively has to be squeezed into the time available whereas MAG used to have a full time PR officer. A full-time PR officer would be a desirable addition to the team once finance became available.

Stephan Walker, Notts asked why standing Order forms take such a long time to process?

Henry explained that upon receipt at MAG Central they are checked, copied and despatched to the Members' bank. From that time they are at the mercy of the banking system. Only when the bank confirms payment will we issue their MAG Membership pack.

Graham Hoose, N Herts stated that a previously supportive local dealer has recently refused to support this year due to a disagreement with a 'problem Member'.

Henry said that in the case of such misunderstandings he was always willing to pick up the phone, only writing if there is no available number. Previous complainants have written to our previous address in Birmingham. Graham was invited to submit details so that this could be investigated.

Mick Southgate, Ipswich asked if the MAG / MBNA deal was still the same?

Henry replied that it was, although we are looking to negotiate an improved rate.

Andy Meredith, Western asked why MAG could not operate a direct debit facility?

It was explained that MAG's standing was not considered sufficiently institutional.

Guest Speaker – Mark Foster

Mark Foster, CEO of the Motorcycle Industry Association, gave a lively and interesting presentation to the meeting. He explained that MCI's task is to minimise downturns in the motorcycle market by taking a more medium to long-term approach. This includes increasing the number of large events funding the MCI. With 20 full-time and 8 agency staff the Association now participates fully in ACEM and IMMA.

The Edge project has enjoyed the investment of £500,000 to reduce casualties and motorcycle theft. Now with 24 police forces involved MAG is playing a major part through Theftline.

President's Address

Following the sad death of Dennis Howard earlier in the year the address was given by Ian Mutch. Ian gave an enjoyable speech remembering Dennis Howard as a jolly, optimistic, entertaining person who, whilst not wealthy, was very much a philanthropist and a rare talent who would never give up.

Presentation of Donations,

West Midlands MAG:	£350
London & Home Counties:	£645
Welsh Motorcycle Shows Ltd:	£6,400
Yorkshire MAG:	£35,000.

Northeast MAG was not in a position to make known the amount of its donation, given the recent nature of Stormin', but another good result was forecast.

All donors were thanked profusely by Julie Stevenson, National Finance Director.

Vice Chairman's Farewell Address

Nich Brown advised Conference that this would be his last AGC as MAG National Vice-Chairman and Conference Chair, although he would continue in Membership and also continue working with MAG through his paid employment at the MCI.

National Chairman's Closing Address

Neil Liversidge gave a formal vote of thanks to MAG's paid staff; Dawn, Ian, Janet, Henry, Phil & Ian Mutch. Streetbiker is now the best publication available and we will miss Nich Brown and hope he will continue to have a long and successful relationship with MCI. Neil went on to thank all MAG volunteers at every level, making special mention of Julie Stevenson for her work as National Finance Director. Neil pointed out that Julie has the most responsible job of any volunteer in MAG in both legal and moral terms, and that she has always discharged both admirably.

Neil noted with satisfaction that MAG had managed to put 'clear blue water' between MAG and its troubles of the last eight years. He said that with good will all round, a determination to look to the future and to lay old arguments to rest, MAG could look forward to bright sunny uplands.

Responding to late comments by Dik Stapley who presented the Yorkshire donation, Neil paid tribute to the Farmyard Party volunteers for their efforts. At the same time he pointed out the imperative of having MAG run in a just fashion, particularly where paid employment (paid for by the Members' money) was concerned, if peace was to prevail within the Membership.

Neil noted that MAG has a great deal going for it as an organisation. Its management is as good as that of any similar organisation and better than most. He stressed the need to bring in all motorcyclists as MAG Members, whether they ride modern sports machines, old British bikes, chops or Harleys. He noted with satisfaction that MAG's '*Bikers are Voters*' slogan adorns jackets and cut-offs everywhere and that the Biker Friendly Cities campaign had been adopted by Industry as had MAG's anti-theft reward scheme. He mentioned the benevolent scheme as being another 'MAG first' and expressed the hope that the level of payment would rise as MAG grew in strength.

Neil paid a personal tribute to Dennis Howard, describing him as a "great inspiring intellect" that grew in stature year on year, and kept amazingly up to date. He finished by thanking his wife Linda and daughter Dominique for their continued tolerance and support in enabling him to carry on the job of MAG National Chairman.

Conference closed at 16.40 with a message from the National Chairman to ride safe home.

Note.

It should be noted that the previously published minutes were incorrect in that they contained items that although raised within the meeting were ruled out of order and therefore should not have been included. MAG accepts that the minutes should not have been published without ratification by MAG's National Committee. MAG would also like to apologise for any distress caused by their inclusion. Any party wishing to lodge a formal complaint relating to the incorrectly published minutes should contact their regional representative.

Mark Rutherford (Ozzy).
Vice-chairman MAG U.K.