

British Radio Car Association

Club Manual

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This is dedicated to those people who had got off their backside back in the late 70's and early 80's to organise the clubs and events I started racing at, your actions have allowed me to enjoy nearly every minute of my racing over the last 20 odd years.

Thanks.

Statement of non-liability.

One of the reasons I have compiled this book can be seen by the fact that this is necessary. Sad isn't it that by giving advice one can be open to legal action without this being included; -

The information contained within is for advice only, if in doubt as to any of it's accuracy or relevance to the reader seek professional advice, I disclaim any responsibility for any actions of the reader.

BRCA 2014.

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Guideline 1

About the Manual

As we head into the new millennium, model motor sport faces many challenges - environmental pressures; increasing costs of competition; difficulties in obtaining venues - to name but a few. Perhaps the greatest challenge, however, comes from other organised activities, which through good organisation and promotion offer people attractive and agreeable ways in which to spend their leisure time. Changing social patterns are also affecting our sport -as an example, many of you will have got into RC cars via other modelling activities, today PC's and Playstations are the norm. As a result of the challenges and changes, model motor clubs need to be well organised and lively if they are to attract people who have so many other things competing for their precious leisure time.

It is hoped that this Manual will be of help in providing practical information which should make running a club easier and stimulating ideas in how to attract new members and to make sure that the images and profile of model motor sport in your community are well perceived.

These Guidelines have been prepared by experienced people in the various fields covered, but we do not claim this to be definitive "know it all" manual. Therefore, any suggestions or corrections which you may wish to make would be very welcome, as these can be incorporated in future Guidelines which may be prepared as this document evolves and periodic updates are made.

Guideline 2

Basic Organisation

- The strength of any club depends on the effectiveness of its committee. Ideally this should be large enough to reflect the various interests in the club but not so large as to be unwieldy. In turn, much of the effectiveness of a committee depends on the chairman (or woman). Duties of officials are covered in more detail in Guideline 3 but the chairman should be the person to be driving the club forward along clearly thought out lines and ideally within a three or even five year plan.
- A forward plan could include such thoughts as:
 - a. Should the club aim to invest in facilities or specific equipment, such as a permanent track, a automated lap counting system, new racing carpet etc
 - b. Does the club want to get an event on the national or international calendar?
 - c. Does it hope to double its membership in five years, stay static or what? If a club doesn't have a long term plan then it can become directionless and just jog along or, worse, slip backwards.
- Clubs should consider holding "way ahead" sessions in which a group (which ideally should include younger members) tries to look into the future and consider where a club wants to be in, say, 5 years and - not least- how it can get there.
- A "way ahead" think-tank may throw up lots of ideas. It is then up to the committee to be realistic and set achievable not impossible targets in making things happen.
- Ideally, committees should be rejuvenated at regular intervals with, say, two new members per year. This can happen if a specific number of existing members drop off for a spell after a certain number of years' service, although with many clubs it may be difficult just to persuade enough people to get involved to even form a committee - this can be dangerous because it can lead to people getting out of touch with their members, particularly younger ones. It is equally dangerous if a committee becomes seen as a clique.
- Other key officials as well as a chairman will be needed, not least an efficient secretary and of course a treasurer. Other functions which should be covered, whether by full members of the committee or ex-officio ones are Public Relations officer and perhaps a drivers rep for example, it may also be wise to put one person in charge of all equipment owned by the club
- For officials to operate efficiently it will help if simple 'job specifications' are drawn up for them. This avoids confusion and duplicated effort because everyone will know who is (or is supposed to be) doing what. It may be argued that 'job specifications' are too formal for what is likely to be an amateur organisation. Not so. Countless other social groups and organisations operate entirely on voluntary help (and compete with model motor sport for members and media attention). If model motor sport is to stay strong we have to be at least as professional in the way we operate.
- A committee will be more efficient if:-
 - a. Members are given "one pagers" in advance of committee meetings, reporting on, say, the financial situation or summarising complicated issues to be discussed.
 - b. Members resist the temptation of refighting issues which were settled (and voted on) at the last committee.
 - c. Sub-committees or working groups are formed to consider specific issues and then report back to the main committee.

Once the basic organisation is in place:

- A club should have a leaflet or booklet about itself to attract and inform new members. The club rules should be made as friendly as possible.
- Membership forms should be clear and friendly and should include space for people to record their particular interests.

- Committee members and club officials should aim for an open style of management and, through the club notice board or newsletter, should keep members informed of what they are doing and why.
- The committee should aim for balanced programmes, catering for all members' interests, not just their own.
- It may be worth running a questionnaire every few years to get a feel for members' interests.
- The Treasurer should encourage the club to set realistic subscription levels; life memberships in particular need careful costing to avoid losing a club money in later years. Comparisons should be made with other organisations in the area
- Consider a category of Honorary Members for local dignitaries who may be of help, or for older members who retire from the scene.
- Annual General Meetings are often poorly attended perhaps because they are considered boring; consider some other attraction after the formal proceedings in order to attract more members.
- Clubs should join and support their Association - they cannot really criticise what goes on in the government of the sport if they don't play their part in the democratic process.
- Clubs should liaise with local Sports Councils and other bodies and should generally try to be participative members of their community.
- For the benefit of future members and not least future P.R. Officers, clubs should keep proper records (see Guideline 12).

Sadly, things don't always run smoothly and clubs sometimes fail. If there seems a danger of this with your club then consider some liaison scheme with an adjacent club - perhaps putting yourself in effect "under their umbrella". This may be better than a direct merger because experience indicates that if two clubs of, say, 50 members each merge, a year or so later there is one club of 50-60 members, while in the process a few key officials may have been lost to the sport. Better of course to work to keep a club lively so that the situation doesn't arise!

Finally, to reinforce the importance of the committee, the final section of this Guideline is the 'Summary of Committee Procedure' issued to their members by the National Federation of Community Organisations. Not all clubs may need such a degree of formality but having at least something along these lines will help to create an efficient committee which doesn't duplicate its efforts or waste its time with waffle.

Summary of Committee procedure (reproduced by kind permission of the National Federation of Community Organisations)

At all Committee Meetings

1. The appropriate Secretary will present an order of business (prepared in consultation with the Chair) in the form of an agenda which is normally circulated in advance of the meeting to committee members.
2. It will be necessary for a minimum number of people (the quorum defined in the constitution) to be present before the committee can transact any business.
3. Punctuality is therefore all the more desirable, otherwise the meeting may not be able to start until latecomers arrive.
4. A record of previous proceedings, in the form of Minutes, must be available, and be adopted as a true record before further action may be taken on matters arising from the Minutes or, indeed, before any other item on the agenda can be considered.
5. The Chair is in control of the meeting. All remarks should be addressed to the Chair, whose rulings (as to who should speak next, for example) must be adhered to.
6. The Secretary will report correspondence received and, where the committee holds funds, the Treasurer will present a statement of income and expenditure, and seek authority for necessary payments.
7. Any committee member may move a resolution relevant to the business in hand, but it may be a help in larger committees for this to be submitted in writing, in advance, to the Secretary. Resolutions, unless moved from the Chair, require a seconder, otherwise they cannot be taken by the meeting. In any case, any amendments to the resolutions have to be considered first.
8. Amendments (if more than one) are normally taken in the order in which they propose to change the motion. When an amendment to a proposition is passed. this becomes the "substantive motion" and the whole motion, as amended, is voted upon. No amendment which is a direct contradiction of the motion is acceptable - after all, you can speak and vote against it!

9. Debate on a motion may be ended by the Chair asking that a vote be now taken. Alternatively, a committee member may propose "that the question be now put" or "move next business". Like other motions, these require seconders and the agreement of the majority of voting members to be carried. Note that moving "next business" leaves matters unresolved - no-one has the opportunity of voting on the matter under discussion!
10. Should the whole meeting run out of time, the committee may decide to hold over some agenda items for the next meeting, possibly bringing the date forward. Alternatively, and particularly where there is too little time to deal with important issues, the meeting may be adjourned (even in the middle of discussing an item of business) to a future date where it can be continued from the point where it left off.
11. Formal votes in a large committee may, at the discretion of that committee, be conducted by ballot. Otherwise a show of hands is quite adequate, the Chair usually counting the votes. In the event of a tied vote, the Chair normally has a second, or casting, vote (see your constitution). It is usual procedure for the vote cast to break a tie to be given in favour of retaining the existing position - the reason behind this being that committee members may, at a later meeting, produce some other proposition to change it which is more acceptable to the committee. After all, you want the support and backing of as many committee members as possible to implement its decisions! In the event of the Chair declining to use the casting vote, the motion must be declared "not carried".
12. Finally, at most meetings some individual committee members volunteer, or get designated, to undertake particular tasks arising from the business of the meeting; if you are one of these, do them promptly (for example, if you are "seeing" someone else, you may have to allow three attempts before you catch him/her in!), and inform as soon as possible, the committee secretary or organiser of the activity that you have done so, and the result of your action.

Guideline 3

Responsibilities of Club Officials

The Officials of a club should be elected (bi)annually by club members at an Annual General Meeting and charged with the responsibility of managing the affairs of the club in an efficient manner to ensure the prosperity and success of the club.

At the AGM, club members should elect the Chairman, Vice Chairman(s), Club Secretary, Treasurer, Auditor and Committee. The number of committee members is at the discretion of the club. Following the election of the committee, committee members should then elect any specialist officers it deems necessary, the usual ones being a Competition Secretary, a Membership Secretary, and a Press & Public Relations Officer (exact titles may of course vary). Clubs may wish to also appoint other officials to look after particular activities such as Championship Secretary, Equipment Officer, Magazine or News Letter Editor, Web Master etc.

The duties of the various officials can generally be described as follows:

Honorary President

Has no specific duties but it is usual to select someone who occupies a leading position in the local community or whose association with the club will enhance its reputation and standing. The President should be encouraged to interest himself in the club's activities and attend at least some of them and be prepared to use his influence and position to help the club whenever possible.

Chairman

This is a key position in the club, equivalent to the Managing Director of a company, with the prime function of co-ordinating all the activities of the club and leading and guiding the other officials in carrying out their duties. The Chairman is the keystone on which the success or otherwise of a club depends.

Vice Chairman

Acting as deputy to the Chairman, acting on his behalf in his absence and generally assisting him in his duties. Some clubs appoint people as vice chairmen for a year or two to 'train' them before they go on to become chairmen.

Secretary

Responsible for dealing with all non-specialist matters and correspondence and diverting to the correct official any matters requiring specialist attention. Keeping the minutes of all meetings and circulating these to the members. Sending out notices of all meetings.

Treasurer

Responsible for keeping the club's accounts in proper order and for planning the club's finances. Preparing budgets and statements of account for presentation at committee meetings. Preparing the annual accounts for presentation at the annual general meeting. Providing all necessary information required by the Auditors. (See also Guideline 4 Finance). It can be a big advantage if the person chosen as Treasurer has experience in the field of finance such as banking, accountancy, etc.

Competition Secretary

If the club runs 'in-house' championships, this official can keep details of contenders and their scores and producing current positions and results at suitable intervals.

Membership Secretary

Responsible for keeping records of the club membership. Dealing with applications from new members. Collecting subscriptions and dealing with membership renewals.

Editor

Responsible for the compiling and production of the club newsletter, obtaining and editing all contributions from club members. Arranging for prompt distribution of the news to club members, often via the webmaster.

Web Master

Where a club has a website, if not why not, a Web Master may be appointed to have responsibility for setting up the site and, importantly, maintaining it with current material relevant to the Club's operation. It is essential that a Web Master liaises closely with the Editor and Press & PR Officer of the Club.

Press and PR Officer

This is an important position, not always given the prominence it merits. Responsible for the promotion of the club and its activities and to generally give the club a good image in the eyes of the public. Maintaining contact with the media and ensuring that the club's competitive and social activities are given maximum coverage. It is helpful if this position can be filled by someone who is connected with the media.

Equipment Officer

Responsible for maintaining all club equipment used for events and advising the committee when new or replacement items are required.

It will be seen that this is a fairly big list of officials and not every club will need all of them, much depends on the activities of each club and it is up to the committee to decide which are needed. Then comes the problem of finding willing people to take on the positions needed. There is much truth in the old saying that 'one volunteer is worth ten pressed men' and it is probably better to leave a position vacant rather than fill it with someone who does not really want the job. With the difficulty of finding members who have enough time to spare to take on a position, it is always a possibility that some of the smaller positions could be duplicated.

In the end, a club is as good, or as bad, as its officials.

These additional pages for "Guideline 3 - Responsibilities of Club Officials" are taken from "RUNNING A CLUB" published by the Sport England; they expand on the work of a club secretary.

Why do you do it?

Have you been elected as Secretary of your Sports club or association? Were you unopposed in the election? Are you likely to continue to be elected unopposed for as long as you are prepared to continue to serve?

If you are reading this guide, it is likely that you answered yes to at least one (and probably all three) of the above questions. If not, then you may well be looking to see what you will be taking on, prior to accepting the nomination.

The job of Club or Association Secretary is the one which most people in sport try hardest to avoid. They will never volunteer, and if nominated, protest with any number of excuses as to why they cannot possibly do it. Of course, several of those reasons also apply to you - sometimes more so than to the person putting them forward. So why have you agreed to do the job?

You will have identified some good reasons for being the Secretary. Have you included the following:

- you want to make a worthwhile contribution to the work of the organisation.
- you want to have more influence over the way the organisation is run.
- you feel that it is your turn and you have an obligation to help.
- you are the best qualified person to do the job.
- you want access to more information about your sport.
- you want to become more closely involved with the running of the organisation.
- you like the friendship and social contacts.

You may find that all these reasons apply to you. If so, you are not unusual, most Secretaries are the same as you!

What do you do?

The Secretary is the nerve-centre of the organisation, not merely a typist and a writer of agendas and minutes. Even a new Secretary will, very quickly, become a mine of information, and must never be reticent to advance an opinion, or volunteer information, whenever appropriate. It is important to know what all the various officers are doing, to make sure that the whole organisation is united in its work.

The Secretary is usually the first person an outsider contacts, and a good Secretary is vital to the successful management of any club or association. The Secretary is the principal administrative officer and provides the link between the members, the executive committee and outside agencies, eg, other clubs, leagues, the governing body, the local community, and the media.

People interested in a sports club contact the Secretary for information or details about membership, meetings, events and activities.

The Secretary does have to do some duties that are regular, repetitive and of low profile. However, if these tasks were not undertaken properly, many clubs would cease to operate. By doing them well, the Secretary can get enormous satisfaction.

Other projects may be novel, unpredictable and exciting. By being at the forefront of the work of the organisation, the Secretary will usually be involved in these special projects, and be able to enjoy the pleasure and excitement that they bring.

What qualities do you need?

To be a good Secretary you need to:

- have plenty of energy
- be enthusiastic about your sport
- be interested in people
- have tact and discretion
- have good organisational skills
- be methodical and reliable
- be able to communicate effectively
- be able to maintain confidentiality
- be able to lead and supervise others
- be able to delegate tasks
- be able to react to opportunities and make decisions.

What equipment is needed?

These are some of the essential items:

- notebook(s) for taking notes during meetings.
- a diary to record a schedule of all the organisation's activities, including events, competitions, closing dates, meetings, social functions, etc.
- a lever-arch file, ring-binder, or minute book in which typed copies of the minutes of meetings, reports and statements of accounts can be stored.
- headed stationery and envelopes.
- files for storing correspondence and records.
- ring-binders to store permanent records.
- a telephone, with access during the daytime and evenings (an answerphone is a valuable aid which is extremely helpful if you cannot otherwise receive calls during the daytime, or are often out in the evenings).
- a fax machine is a very valuable investment for a busy organisation, or one that frequently needs to send or receive urgent correspondence.

Many organisations now use computers. They help produce letters, reports and posters quickly and accurately, and enable compact storage of information, such as:

- membership lists
- results of competitions
- standard letters
- financial records.

Use the computer as an aid and a tool, to improve accuracy and to save time. Remember, though, that some tasks may actually take longer using a computer, and can still be done better and quicker by using pen and paper.

Correspondence

Follow these tips to deal with the Club's correspondence quickly and efficiently:

- record the date on all incoming mail when it is received and note on it to whom copies have been distributed. (This helps prevent cries from committee members that they never received a particular letter or details about a particular event).
- deal with each letter promptly. If you cannot answer the query, or need to wait until the next committee meeting for a policy decision, send a courtesy reply, which acknowledges the correspondence and explains the reason for the delay. If this sort of thing happens often, prepare copies of a standard letter that you can use.
- make sure that you are up-to-date with correspondence before committee meetings, so that information can be distributed and dealt with at the meeting, whenever possible.
- keep a copy or a note of the letters that you send, and the date that you sent them.
- file copies of correspondence under the appropriate heading, if you think that you might need to refer to them again. Do not file everything just for the sake of it, and throw things away when the matter has been finalised, or they are no longer of any use.
- keep notes of important telephone conversations.
- make informal enquiries or replies by telephone or handwritten. A typed or computer generated letter looks impressive, but if it is not going to help your organisation, it is not worth the extra time and effort!
- Standard letters are a big help. Spaces can be left to enter information that may change leg, dates, names, fees, etc), but the overall form of many letters will follow standard themes, eg:

Thank you for your enquiry which will be dealt with at the meeting on

I am pleased to say that you have been accepted as a member. The fee for the year ispayable to the Treasurer by.....

Thank you for your letter regardingI enclose some information that may be of assistance to you.

Liaison with other members

The Secretary has an important responsibility to keep everyone informed of decisions and events, and to check that tasks have been carried out.

A close working relationship with the Chairperson and President is essential, and the Secretary should ensure that they are well informed on all matters related to the organisation.

Organising a meeting

- Make arrangements for the meeting venue, including admission to the building, seating arrangements, and use of services, eg, catering, photocopying, etc.
- Send adequate notice of the meeting to all concerned. Members need the papers well in advance, about ten days before the date of the meeting is ideal (this is enough time to read them, but not too long so that they

mislaid them!). Include the venue, time, day and date of the meeting, together with the agenda. The agenda may be prepared in consultation with the Chairperson. If possible, the minutes of the previous meeting also should be enclosed if they have not already been sent, together with any other correspondence or documents that members need to read before the discussion on the topic.

- If possible, prepare in advance a schedule of meetings for the year, and get it agreed by the committee. Otherwise, it may be necessary to consult all the members about their availability before fixing a date. In any case you should always consult the Chairperson before fixing the date of any meeting.
- Give plenty of notice of the proposed time and date of the meeting. A General Meeting or large committee or council needs at least a month's notice. In the case of a smaller committee, consult the members by memo or telephone, enquiring when they are available, prior to fixing the date.

A meeting agenda

There will be a meeting of the.....Committee at..... (place) on..... (date), from.....(time)

1. Welcome and introductions.
2. Apologies for absence.
3. Minutes - to approve the minutes of the previous meeting as a correct record.
4. Matters arising - to consider any matters arising not otherwise included on the agenda.
5. Financial report
 1. to receive a report on the current financial position;
 2. to make any decisions regarding budgets, fees, expenses, payments, etc.
6. Consideration of reports from officers and sub-committees.
7. General business.
8. Administrative business, including consideration of statutory matters (eg, date for AGM).
9. Date of next meeting.
10. Any other business.

Writing minutes

At the end of a complicated discussion, provide a brief, clear summary of what you think has been agreed. Confirm in a few words the decision, the action to be taken, who is going to take that action, and by when.

The Secretary is in an influential position, but has the onerous task of contributing to the discussions whilst keeping a record of the meeting. Do not assume that you will be able to remember all the decisions as memory fades rapidly. Short notes and jottings taken during the meeting may seem perfectly clear at the time but a week later can cause puzzlement as to what was actually agreed.

Follow these guidelines when you write the minutes:

- list those people present, and record the apologies for absence.
- follow the order of the agenda, and try to keep each section short. Give each subsection its own separate heading, and give each point a separate paragraph.
- state the main issues, and decisions made. It is not necessary to set down the various points of view that were expressed, or the proposers and seconders of resolutions, unless there has been a strong difference of opinion expressed, leading to a vote on the issue.
- do not take sides when recording a discussion. Try to be objective.
- record the full texts of motions, if a vote was taken.
- write up the minutes as soon as possible after the meeting, while the discussions are still fresh in your mind.
- circulate the minutes to all members of the committee soon after the meeting (ideally within a few days, so as to inform those who were absent and to remind those who have some work to do arising from the meeting).

- log action points that need to be followed up by making a diary note for a fortnight's time to check that the jobs have been done.
- when minuting General Meetings, which are usually governed by strict constitutional rules regarding procedure, keep a formal record, stating the names of proposers and seconders, and quoting the exact text of resolutions, and the voting.
- Committee Meetings can be minuted more informally, by simply stating the decisions which have been taken, unless any special request has been made to indicate disagreement.
- minute decisions by following a standard style, choosing the appropriate word to suit the circumstances, thus:

The Meeting:

Agreed - indicates a strong consensus to support a particular course of action.

Recommended - indicates a proposal to another committee or organisation.

Noted - indicates that a matter was reported, but no decision was necessary.

Received - indicates that a report was presented and accepted.

Approved - indicates that a recommendation has been endorsed.

Recognised - indicates that information was accepted, but no decision was taken.

Resolved - indicates that a motion was formally proposed, voted upon and passed.

Annual General Meetings

The Secretary is responsible for preparing the Annual General Meeting (AGM), and making arrangements to ensure that all members receive the necessary information. This may include:

- arranging venue, date and time.
- collecting reports from other officers.
- notifying members of the date, time and place of the meeting, which needs to be done well in advance. (the constitution usually stipulates the minimum period of notice required).
- inviting and receiving nominations for the election of officers (refer to the constitution to find the closing date for nominations).
- arranging for the printing of the annual report and statement of accounts.
- arranging for guest speakers, if this is usual practice.
- arranging catering and hospitality.

The rules of all clubs and associations should state how notification of the Annual General Meeting must be given to members. The Secretary should be aware of the special rules of the organisation and follow them strictly. The meeting could be declared invalid if the rules have not been followed.

The AGM is an opportunity for all members to attend, learn and question how their organisation is being run. They can comment on the annual report and statement of accounts, determine any amendments to the constitution and rules, and elect the officers and committee for the coming year. At an AGM, decisions should not be taken on any item that was not included on the printed agenda. This ensures that if any changes to the constitution or rules are being considered, all members have an opportunity to think about the proposals in detail, and to prepare counter arguments if appropriate.

Keeping records

- The filing and maintenance of club records is the responsibility of the Secretary. It is important to know where you can find the information about all the different club activities.
- Minutes of meetings, annual reports and statements of accounts are best kept in a ringbinder, in date order (the most recent copy at the front). This ensures that a good copy (the copy which has been signed to certify that it is a correct record) is always easily accessible, and stored safely. Do not remove these master copies from the ring-binder.

- If the Secretary is responsible for maintaining records of the current members, this information may be kept in a box file, in a ledger or on a computer. If the organisation has a lot of members or regularly sends information to members, access to a computer which can print sticky labels for the mailing list is very useful.
- Membership records may be necessary for returns to regional or national associations and in support of applications for grants or financial support. Make sure that the up-to-date numbers are always at your fingertips.
- Historical records are useful for reunions, fund-raising activities, recruiting volunteers, etc. Be selective, however, and throw away anything which is not worth keeping or is out of date and of no historical interest. A lot of routine correspondence does not need to be kept at all, and should be destroyed immediately. Ask yourself 'if this information has been given over the telephone, would I have made a special point of writing it down and filing it?' If not, then throw it away, now!

Things to avoid

- Don't make the committee deal with lots of trivial topics. It frustrates them and may annoy them if items which they think are more important have been left off the agenda, or are not reached.
- Don't put the most important item at the end of the agenda in the hope that the committee will quickly deal with the other matters and then be able to concentrate on this item. If somebody feels strongly about an item early on the agenda, they are more likely to start a long discussion, and you may never get to the important topic. People are more attentive at the beginning of meetings, and it is better to have their energy directed to important items then, rather than starting off by dealing with trivia points, which may then get more discussion than they warrant.
- Avoid encouraging members to talk at length about their own pet project or hate. (A written agenda distributed in advance makes it much easier for the Chairperson to bring the discussion back to the important issues.)
- Don't let matters arising from the previous meeting take up most of the time at the next meeting. This is frustrating because nothing new is being accomplished, and it is nonproductive because the meeting is talking about things which have already been decided, or may have already happened, rather than talking about the future. Identify loose ends from the previous meeting and set them down as agenda topics of their own, putting them in priority order, near the end of the agenda.
- Don't let the Committee forget about the people they are serving. Too often, a committee becomes immersed in its own activities, and disregards the needs and interests of the members.

Things to remember

To be a good Secretary of your organisation, remember the following tips: · you need to be keen to do a good job.

- you need to be well organised and conscientious. · correspondence must be dealt with promptly.
- follow the guidelines for meetings to ensure that they are productive.
- the important thing about keeping records is keeping the right records, and being able to find them quickly and easily.

It will not take long for you to become a very valuable and important member of the organisation. If at any time you get the feeling that you are not appreciated, try hinting that perhaps you will not be standing for re-election next time. Suddenly you will find that everybody is unanimous in their praise for you.

Guideline 4

Finance and Taxation

The finances of a Model motor club are the responsibility of the committee with the administration being delegated to the club Treasurer whose duties are described in the Guideline on Club Officials. If, as suggested in that Guideline, it has been possible to find a treasurer with experience in the field of finance, he or she will have no difficulty in financial planning including keeping and presenting the club accounts, but if on the other hand, this has not been possible and the treasurer is keen but not particularly experienced, then the advice of a club Auditor should be obtained as they can then brief the treasurer on the information they will require and the best way of providing this. They may make a small charge for this, if so, it is money well spent to know that the club's finances are properly controlled and its accounts are being properly kept and looked after.

The treasurer should produce a statement of income and expenditure with the current balance as required so that the committee members are kept up to date with the state of the club's finances and can take any steps which may be necessary before it is too late for appropriate action to be initiated. At the end of each financial year, the treasurer must submit the annual Income and Expenditure accounts for the approval of the committee and after this, he or she will submit them to the members at the Annual General Meeting and have approved by the Auditor.

The committee must ensure that adequate control is maintained over the club's expenditure. In the first place this means that any planned expenditure, other than minor items such as postage, stationery etc., must be approved by the committee with competitive tenders being obtained where desirable; such decisions should of course be minuted. The second method of control is the nomination of persons authorised to sign cheques on behalf of the club, this is usually any two of three nominees, say, the Chairman, Treasurer and one other committee member.

There are a wide choice of types of bank account today, and professional advice could be useful in best matching the needs of individual clubs. Many clubs will have both a current (cheque) account and an interest earning deposit account, so that money can be switched between the two as the need arises - large sums of money should not be left unused in a current account if it can be earning interest elsewhere. Generally, it is more important to have the club accounts held in a Bank which is convenient for Club Officials to visit (e.g. close to the place of work of the Treasurer), - so that payments in can be made promptly and any queries can be resolved directly - than to have it in a less convenient location earning perhaps very little extra interest. Delaying payments out can enhance the level of interest accrued by the Club, but be careful - it can also damage the relationship of the Club with local Traders, who could be useful to the Club in the future, perhaps as event sponsors or supporters. Better to pay them on time and retain their goodwill!

Most clubs will obtain their income from two main sources:

- a. Subscriptions from their members.
- b. The profits from events run by the club.

Against this income is set the club's expenditure which again falls into two main categories:

- a. The cost of running the club's general activities (overheads) including such items as printing and stationery, postage, advertising, cost of club magazine, depreciation etc.
- b. The cost of running events.

Ideally, the overheads should be financed if possible from the members' subscriptions and the competitive events should be self financing with the aim of producing a profit which can be used for such items as the buying and maintenance of equipment and the purchase of specialist items such as track markers etc. If the subscriptions do not cover the overheads, then some of the event profits will need to be used to make up the shortfall and some should be set aside for a reserve fund, which every club would be well advised to create and maintain at a reasonable level to cover contingencies which may arise from time to time and which have not been allowed for in the budget.

Each club needs to decide what sort of profits they wish to aim for depending on the state of their existing finances and their plans for future development and spending. This will require a budget which should be prepared by the treasurer, assisted where necessary by committee members who might be responsible for any specialist activities such as social events, club magazine etc. When this budget has been prepared, the committee will be able to decide on the subscription rates for the forthcoming year.

Whilst most Model Motor Clubs today are 'Friendly Societies' some may be considering becoming a Limited company, this is a complex matter which is the subject of continuous change according to the size of the organisation, the type of events it organises and, not least, changes in Company Law made by successive Governments. If you are considering going down this path you must consult with a specialist legal adviser.

It should be mentioned that these notes are in the main intended for the advice and information of committees rather than treasurers who hopefully will either know how to handle the job, or if not, will seek professional guidance. Bearing in mind that a club running, say, two major events per year may well be dealing with a turnover running into five figures, the management and control of this amount of money is one of the most important aspects of running a successful club and must be given its due priority at committee meetings.

These additional pages for "Guideline 4 - Finance and taxation" in the Model Motor Club Manual are taken from "LOOKING AFTER THE MONEY" published by the Sport England.

What is a Treasurer?

All sports organisations should keep accurate financial records, and one member of the committee (the Treasurer) takes on this special responsibility.

The rules of a club or association usually say that a Treasurer should be appointed at the Annual General Meeting. The post of Treasurer is a voluntary position, although in larger organisations some of the Treasurer's work may be undertaken by a paid finance officer. In that case the Treasurer will have a supervisory role.

A newly elected Treasurer should meet the outgoing Treasurer, the Chairperson or President (and the Auditor if the organisation has one), to discuss the work that needs to be done. Talking to the Auditor is particularly valuable because at the end of the year the Treasurer will have to give the Auditor all the financial records, and it will be helpful to know exactly what will be required.

The Treasurer is the main person responsible for the finances, but must work closely with the other members of the committee. It is important that the finances are handled in accordance with the constitution and committee decisions of the organisation. Whether the Treasurer works alone or with the help of a paid official, the Treasurer is ultimately responsible for many functions related to finance.

What qualities are needed?

The Treasurer has a most important job to perform, and it is important that the Treasurer is:

- enthusiastic
- well organised
- prepared to make a regular time commitment
- able to keep records
- careful when handling money and cheques
- scrupulously honest
- able to answer questions in meetings
- confident about handling figures
- prepared to take instant decisions when necessary.

What does the Treasurer do?

Whether working alone or with the help of a paid official, the Treasurer is ultimately responsible for:

- looking after the finances of the organisation
- collecting subscriptions and all money due to the organisation

- paying the bills and recording the information
- keeping up-to-date records of all the financial transactions
- ensuring that all cash and cheques are promptly deposited in the bank or building society
- ensuring that funds are spent properly
- issuing receipts for all money received and recording this information
- reporting regularly to the committee on the financial position
- preparing a year-end statement of accounts to present to the Auditors
- arranging for the statement of accounts to be audited
- presenting an end-of-year financial report to the Annual General Meeting
- financial planning including producing an annual budget and monitoring it throughout the year
- helping to prepare and submit any statutory documents that are required (eg, VAT returns, grant aid reports).

Even if these duties are delegated to a professional officer, the Treasurer is still ultimately responsible. It is up to the Treasurer to make sure that any delegated work is done properly.

What equipment is needed?

To be an efficient Treasurer, you will need the following equipment:

- a suitable piece of software, either an off the peg accounts package or Excel works just fine.
- calculator
- receipt book (in duplicate) to issue receipts for money received
- box file or lever-arch file for storing papers with which you are currently dealing
- ring-binders (2) for storing the completed documents
- petty cash box
- financial information of the organisation from previous years.

If you prefer, you can use a paper ledger system, use the same book to record both receipts and payments. If you do, make sure that you keep the two sections separate. If the book is wide enough, use left-hand pages just for receipts, and right-hand pages just for payments.

Paying the bills

Bills should be paid within one month of receiving them, especially when dealing with companies you use often. Their goodwill is important, and they will be more likely to want to trade with you again and give you good terms or discounts, if they know they will be paid reasonably promptly. It is also important to pay out-of-pocket expenses to volunteers promptly, since they have already paid out the money on behalf of the organisation, and are giving their time free of charge. Their co-operation and goodwill is vital to the success of the organisation.

Normally, bills will be for items which have been budgeted, for expenditure which has already been approved or for routine items. If the Treasurer gets a bill for something that has not been approved, and is not routine, the committee should be informed and asked for guidance.

It is a good idea for the committee to set limits for financial decisions. If it is a very small amount (e.g., up to £25) then the Treasurer could authorise it personally; a larger sum (e.g., between £25 and £100) might require consultation with the other officers (Chairperson and Secretary), and a larger figure still (eg, over £100) would require the approval of the full committee.

All payments should relate to a written invoice or document. This also applies to claims for expenses from members of the committee. It is easy to produce a simple claim form for them to fill in before you pay them. This helps the Treasurer and makes sure that all the payments are properly documented.

Do not rely on your memory when handing out cheques. Always make sure that you have some proper documentation.

Accounting for the money

The accounts comprise records which keep a record of all income and expenditure, usually covering a 12 month period (the financial year). It is advisable at the end of the 12 month period to have the accounts audited (looked at and verified) by an independent person; preferably someone with professional qualifications (the Auditor).

All the receipts and payments should be recorded, and a summary of these should be prepared showing all the receipts and payments of the organisation during a 12 month period (the financial year).

If the organisation is a limited company, it must have a registered Auditor who produces a report under the requirements of the Companies Act. Most members clubs, which are not limited companies, elect Honorary Auditors to inspect and verify the accounts which the Treasurer produces.

Here are a few basic items that should be recorded for every transaction:-

- date of the entry
- person whom you are paying (or from whom you have received the money)
- cheque number (for payments by you) or receipt number (for receipts issued by you)
- reference number for that entry; this number should also be written on the invoice or expenses claim form for easy cross reference
- details of the transaction (what was it for?)
- VAT element (only necessary if you are VAT registered).

Whenever cheques are paid into a bank or building society, the receipts section of the cash book should be totalled, and a note made of the total amount put in the bank, with the date. These totals can easily be compared with the bank statements to make sure the two agree.

Collecting money

Always keep cash received separate from your own money. Keep a cash box solely for the club's money, and write receipts in duplicate as soon as you receive the money. Hand one receipt to the person who pays you and the other one is your copy which should be kept in the book.

Deposit all cash and cheques in the bank or building society as soon as possible after receiving it. Not only is this efficient administration, it also makes good financial sense, since money in bank and building society accounts is likely to earn interest, and reduce banking charges.

Invoices

If you send out invoices to collect some of your money, you will need a book that shows that an invoice has been issued and later confirms that it has been settled. The people who owe you money, to whom invoices have been sent, are called Debtors.

If you receive lots of invoices to pay (i.e., bills), try to allow for these when the final accounts are prepared. Include the expenditure in the financial year to which it relates, irrespective of when the bill is actually paid. The people to whom you owe money are called Creditors.

Petty Cash

Sometimes you need to use cash for small payments where it is impractical or unreasonable to use a cheque. This petty cash needs to be handled carefully or it becomes difficult to control. A small analysis book (the petty cash book) is therefore needed to record the cash received, the cash paid out, and the balance in hand. This balance figure should be updated whenever any cash is received or paid out and checked against the actual cash in the cash box. If there is any discrepancy, it needs to be sorted out immediately.

Do not make the mistake of bundling all the money together over a few days or weeks. The longer you leave it, the more difficult and time consuming it will be to sort out later.

Don't take short cuts, or expect to remember exactly who has given you what. Write everything down immediately in a book or a file. Don't be tempted to use just any convenient scrap of paper and sort it out later. The power of the human memory is not that great!

Preparing a budget

A good Treasurer does not just record details of what has happened, but also tries to forecast what is likely to happen. This forecast (the budget) is very important for your organisation. When it is done well, it helps future planning and decision making, and allows you to decide whether to spend money, increase fees, or rethink your activities.

The detailed preparation of the budget is usually left to the Treasurer and one or two selected officers. However, it should always be discussed with the committee for modification and approval. The budget does not need to be presented to a General Meeting, but in a small organisation you should involve the members, and keep them aware of what is happening. They are much more likely to agree to an increase of fees or charges if they understand the financial pressures that the committee is facing.

Do not set a budget with a deficit, in the hope that something will turn up. Always aim for the budget to at least break even, and ideally build in a contingency fund. This caters for unexpected things that crop up during the year, or turn out to cost more than you anticipated.

Sometimes, you will find that your original budget was inaccurate, and it will then be worth preparing a revised budget forecast with a more accurate prediction of the final outcome for the year. You can then make decisions based on a clearer idea of the total funds that are available to you.

People who are going to have to work within a budget are much more likely to be careful with the money if they understand the reasons for the decisions, and were involved in setting the figures.

Statement of accounts

The Treasurer should regularly prepare an up-to-date statement of accounts showing the receipts and payments to date, the budget for the year, and the balance left. Break down the totals into a few important headings (eg, administration, rent, affiliation fees, etc). If you want to include invoices which you have issued but have not yet been paid in the totals, be careful to include only those invoices that you are certain will be paid.

Accounts prepared purely on the basis of money received or actually spent are termed Receipts and Payments Accounts. If invoices which have been issued or received by you are also included, it is termed an Income and Expenditure Account.

Financial year-end

At the end of the financial year, the Treasurer needs to prepare a set of final accounts to be presented to the members at the AGM, accompanied by an Auditor's report if required. Make sure that there is enough time between the financial year-end and the AGM for the Treasurer to prepare everything and for the Auditor to have time to look at the documents, prepare the final accounts, and submit a report.

Audited accounts are the final statement of accounts, after they have been checked and verified by somebody with recognised accounting skills (eg, a Chartered Accountant) as being a true and accurate record of the financial affairs of your organisation.

Try to find an accountant who is a member of your club, or who is prepared to give his or her service on a voluntary basis. Give the Auditor plenty of time to complete the work, and try to get everything into good order before passing on the books and papers. The annual accounts are prepared from your books and financial records. There will be two statements required, which will differ slightly depending on whether you are working on a receipts and payments or income and expenditure basis.

If you are working on a receipts and payments basis, you will need:

- statement of receipts and payments for the financial year
- statement of assets and liabilities as at the last day of the financial year.

This shows the total value of the organisation, and the whereabouts of the various assets. If there are no outstanding invoices or bills, and you do not have any fixed assets (property, equipment, etc), the cash balance on the Receipts and Payments Account will be the only asset, and a separate statement of assets and liabilities is unnecessary.

Receipts and payments

A Receipts and Payments Account is prepared from the cash book and summarises monies actually received and paid out during a financial period.

No adjustments are made for receipts or payments which relate to previous or future periods. It gives a summary of the actual financial transactions, and the cash balance of the organisation on a given date. The basic lay-out of a Receipts and Payments Account is shown below.

Of course, the total figures for money received and payments made will be itemised under appropriate headings to give you the detailed information you need.

Receipts	£	Payments	£
Balance brought forward from previous year	110	Payments made	260
Money received to next period	280	Balance carried forward	130
Total	390	Total	390

Income and expenditure

If you are working on an income and expenditure basis you will need a:

- statement of income and expenditure for the financial year
- balance sheet as at the last day of the financial year.

An Income and Expenditure Account includes unpaid bills (creditors) and any money owed to you (debtors) and looks like this:

Income	£	Expenditure	£
Cash receipts	245	Payments made	240
Add debtors	90	Add creditors	55
Total	225	Total	295

Of course, the total figures for income (receipts plus debtors) and expenditure (payments plus creditors) will be itemised under headings which are appropriate to you to give the detailed information you need.

Any depreciation (e.g., on office equipment) should be subtracted from the surplus before closing the Income and Expenditure Account for the year, and the net surplus or deficit figure carried over to the balance sheet. Purchases of items that are being valued on the balance sheet as fixed assets (e.g., purchase of a new typewriter) should not appear in the Income and Expenditure Account.

Balance sheets

If you have an income and expenditure statement, you will also need a balance sheet, which shows what the organisation is worth at a particular point in time. A balance sheet is usually prepared for the last day of the financial year. It takes account of debtors (money owed to you) and creditors (money owed by you).

Balancing the bank account

A bank statement is the bank's record of the organisation's finances. This record may not agree exactly with what is kept by the Treasurer in the cash book because it can take a few days for credits and debits to appear in a bank account.

Bank statements should be obtained regularly (monthly is usually about right) and be checked immediately against the books to reconcile the bank account with these books. This enables you to keep up-to-date and identify any mistakes or discrepancies. It will be much easier to sort out any differences now, rather than several months later, and it helps you to avoid having an overdraft, which is expensive.

Working with the committee

The Treasurer should not work alone, but needs to know what everybody else on the committee is doing. Similarly, the rest of the committee ought to know about the finances of the organisation.

Get your committee to agree that the Treasurer must be kept informed well in advance of any significant expenditure that is being planned, even if it is within the approved budget. This helps to avoid serious overspending or cash flow problems which could have been prevented had the Treasurer known in advance.

All members of the committee share a responsibility to ensure that the organisation is financially viable, even though they might prefer not to have to worry about money. They should be informed about the financial situation and reminded at every opportunity that they have a responsibility to help look after the financial wellbeing of the organisation.

Tips to remember

- You only need to know two things about money: how to manage it and how to get more of it!
- Every club or association, no matter how small, should keep proper accounts and prepare regular statements. Every year many sports organisations have to close down because of lack of financial control, or poor financial planning.
- An organisation which is slapdash in handling and accounting for its money is likely to be sloppy in other aspects of its work.
- Money may not be the Root of all Evil, but when dealing with other people's money you can expect high levels of interest and emotion. They will always expect their money to be handled with extreme care and sensitivity. Not only must you look after the funds with scrupulous honesty, but you must be seen to do so.
- Sports organisations must be seen to be honest, or no one will have confidence to contribute funds to them.
- It is wrong for people to steal, but it is also wrong to treat money so casually that people feel less conscience-stricken about stealing it, and less afraid of being discovered. Try to establish a system which prevents fraud, rather than one to discover it or compensate for it.

Do not over-estimate your ability to remember details of financial transactions - write them down!

The important thing about accounting, apart from being accurate, is to be consistent, so that you can make meaningful comparisons from month to month, and from year to year.

- Always give receipts for money received and get receipts for money paid out.
- Keys to the safe or petty cash boxes should only be held by specified people who are always responsible for them. Keep incoming and outgoing money separate
- Pay surplus cash into the bank promptly, and use a paying-in book.
- When opening mail or collecting tins containing cash, there should be at least two people present.
- Budgeting is one of the most important financial functions for any sporting organisation, whether large or small. Do not be tempted to try to manage without a budget, or you will be heading for financial difficulties.

The bottom line

If you have been appointed as Treasurer of your club or association, then with a little care and attention you can ensure its financial well-being. You will get a great deal of satisfaction from playing such an important role, and you will have the respect and thanks of everybody around you.

If you feel under pressure, confused, or that you are losing control, seek help at once. Advise the Chairperson or Secretary and ask for their agreement to getting some professional advice. Remember that you are a volunteer, not an accountant and you are making a vital contribution to the well-being of the club. It is much better to get some paid help to sort things out immediately, than for you to lose control of the finances, which may lead to the demise of the organisation.

We hope you have enjoyed reading this and have found it helpful in your role as Treasurer. Good luck and happy accounting!

Membership Records

Keeping membership records sounds as if it should be a simple job, and it can be PROVIDED proper thought is given to setting up a clear system. If possible this should be based on computer technology - which can then be used for the various mailings which will be sent to members - but whatever system is adopted to must be easily understood and above all, workable. If the Membership Secretary moves away or falls ill - will the club collapse? If so, the system is too complicated.

Whether records are kept or in a card index or whatever, whoever maintains them should adopt a methodical approach because experience suggests that once records start to get out of kilter it can be a major task to get them back on track.

Membership information

This obviously depends on the size of the club concerned, but it is always handy having certain information on your members. For example, if details of occupation are requested on membership forms, you can always find out who are in financial jobs - they might make good treasurers. While those in the building trade can perhaps help with the building of a clubhouse or getting hold of supplies for events such as stakes and wood etc. Someone who works in the Local Planning Department may be useful if you have a venue problem, or if you have a major future project to consider. Think laterally!

Membership cards

There are many and various types of membership cards used by clubs, some contain a lot of information, others are little more than a cardboard receipt!

Suitable cards can be bought from most stationers, if used correctly a good membership card system can save hours of time when booking in at a meeting.

Club Affiliation

Please read Guideline 17 for how the above now fits into the club affiliation process.

Guideline 6

Legal

Should a club be a limited company?

“Should we form a limited company?” is a common question, hence this guideline.

The first question to ask is whether an unincorporated sporting club would benefit, if it formed and carried on its business as a limited liability company. It all depends! It certainly does aid other people and organisations to know with whom they are dealing because information about the Company and its officers has to be filed regularly with the Registrar of Companies in addition to a copy of its annual accounts. All this information about the Club (which has now taken on a separate and independent identity of its own) becomes part of the public domain.

So there is a theoretical benefit to outsiders but what about perceived benefits for club members? Firstly, the choice of legal framework affects the liability of the club and its members differently depending on whether it is incorporated or not. Put simply, in the event of an unincorporated club ceasing its activities, whether voluntarily or involuntarily, the officers of that club are usually responsible personally for any liabilities of the club should its assets prove insufficient to discharge its debts in full. The officers in this context usually embrace those club members elected to sit on the main or controlling committee viz., chairman, club secretary, competition secretary, treasurer etc.

On the other hand, members of the limited liability company are, in normal circumstances, only liable to the extent of their investment. The form of company, which is adopted widely as most suitable for sporting clubs, is that of Limited by Guarantee. Such a company does not have shareholders but each member guarantees that in the event of the company being wound up and being proved insolvent, he or she will pay (usually a nominal £1) if called upon to do so. Conversely, company's Limited by Guarantee don't usually distribute profits to their members. Such details are embedded in the constitution and terms of reference which in company terminology is known as the Memorandum and Articles.

One issue seems to confuse most of us. The relationship between members and directors. The company's members (shareholders, club members, guarantors) are its controlling influence, i.e. they have the vote. The directors, although of a much higher profile, are subservient to the members who employ/elect them to run the day to day activities of the organisation. However the downside is that under company law it is the directors who are normally called to book if things go wrong. The directors in our limited company for instance would probably be the self same elected officers of the unincorporated club mentioned above. It is also important for budding directors to note the current statutory position is that directors of a company may be personally liable for its debts if they have allowed the Company to trade and incur those debts whilst knowing it was insolvent.

So to avoid such insolvent trading incorporate and you will have “ringed fenced” the club members by limiting their exposure to a £1 each. But, as we know, life is not so clear cut. What if the Company, although breaking even on its trading has no assets to speak of? Who in their right mind would give unsecured credit? Certainly not everybody and particularly not bankers. Those most prudent amongst us often look for other ways of underwriting the transaction when dealing with “companies of straw”, often in the form of a personal guarantee. Which usually means in practical terms the directors putting their personal goods and chattels up as collateral security. Which brings us back to where we started!

Obviously the best way to protect the club's funds and the personal wealth of its officers, is to manage the financial risk from the outset.

If we analyse the typical club's exposure to risk we may well find they fall into two distinct categories. Those risks arising from normal trading with club members and others which if carefully managed should minimise the exposure and, secondly, those outside your control usually involving some catastrophic happening. It is the latter unplanned event which could bring a club to its knees. But help is at hand. Enter the insurance broker. He has at his finger tips insurance's to meet all contingencies of club life. Remember however, that the BRCA has already covered its recognised clubs, members and officials against third party claims made

against them arising from an accident at an event (easily the single most probable source of a crippling claim). However, as any glance through the newspapers shows, people seem ever more ready to sue on the slightest pretext and a 'happening', not on an event - perhaps an accident during high jinx at a party or a serious libel in your club media publications - could be just as financially disastrous.

Ensure that your club and its officials are fully protected by public liability insurance the BRCA treasurer can advise on this matter.

On balance a club has to weigh up the protection given by the limited liability company with the disadvantage, inconvenience and expense of servicing the company. For whereas the initial formation charges are of a modest amount and with professional fees would not generally be of an unbearable cost for a club, the administration, annual cost of filing returns, the audit and other statutory requirements does generate an increased clerical burden with the possibilities of fines for non compliance.

If you are intent on forming your club into a limited company, take advice from a solicitor specialising in such matters and in the meantime be careful, vigilant and business like in your dealings to protect your club and its officials.

Guideline 7

Insurance

The Serious Bit – Insurance & The RC Racer

As treasurer of the BRCA I am responsible for the administration of the public liability insurance for our membership, I am quite regularly asked details about why it's necessary, what it covers, and why its becoming a really important area of today's society and how it effects YOU.

The most important point is what it is for:- Public Liability insurance covers the individual or club against claims made against them for injuries or other damage caused to members of the public i.e. any other racer (who at that moment isn't involved in the race), a spectator, or other bystander or property belonging to them.

It is a sad fact of modern living that an 'Accident' is no more, they just don't happen any more, we now have 'incidents' and 'incidents' are always somebody's fault, this is to allow solicitors to make a living, and for people to think about ever more amazing ways to get 'compensation'. Nearly every day we see adverts on the television for specialist legal firms offering a 'no win no fee' service, for compensation claims, for injuries received.

These 'experts' are the people you end up dealing with when things go wrong.

Rule No. One - Model Car Racing is Fun.

Rule No. Two - Fun does not mean irresponsible.

Is it really necessary?

Well that depends on your outlook doesn't it?

Insurance is only necessary when you need to use it, however there are, I would estimate, 15,000 racers in the UK, plus countless thousands just using RC cars for fun. I personally deal with about 4 cases in an average year for the BRCA membership of some 8,000, so the odds are about 2,000 to one that you will be involved in accident in the next twelve months that results in an insurance claim, pretty low, but I bet you have a go on the lottery and that's 14,000,000 to one!

A race director / club chairman will insist that you produce your membership card, or prove that your insurance is valid, before he lets you race. Can you imagine the problems for him if he allowed someone without insurance to compete and injury to a member of the public or another racer happened?

Remember it is their responsibility to ensure that they and the club and all the racers present are insured and all protected from personal liability – they are not being awkward they are being very sensible indeed, respect it – or race somewhere else / not at all.

If the sport ever became uninsurable then there wouldn't be any racing as nobody (in their right mind anyway) would be willing to put the events on or run a club for it.

The Cover is: -

Public Liability Insurance of £10,000,000

To include: -

Cover for use: - Anywhere in the UK at Anytime.

Cover as an organiser as well as a competitor.

Cover for organisers no matter where or when the event is held in the UK.

The Cover Isn't: -

Personal Accident. If you hurt yourself, either by running yourself over (don't laugh it has happened.) or by stepping out in front of a car, without looking, whilst marshalling (see note below on this) then you're on your own as far as our cover is concerned.

If you're concerned about this / don't get paid sick / generally clumsy etc – then get yourself Personal Accident cover, it's not hugely expensive (a few multiples of your membership fee!) and it's normal intention is to replace your normal level of income if you hurt yourself.

Always: -

Use your car in a responsible manner. Never use it somewhere the law (or local bylaws) don't allow – the street being the normal one seen – if in doubt as to the suitability of a site, go with your doubts and go somewhere else.

How it affects who: - The Fun User – 'Bashing'

You may be thinking 'I don't race therefore I have no problem', please think again.

Tracks have to have a barrier / fence so the cars are restrained from getting to the public and visa versa, driving one in the park has no safety features. There is nothing to stop the car if you get interference and there is nothing to stop the people who haven't seen or heard what you are doing. This is probably why there are more accidents involving relatively slow, but quiet, electric cars than the fast, but noisy, i.c. cars. In this kind of situation it is always the responsibility of the user, you are directly responsible for your, and your cars actions.

The Club Racer

Most claims result from club meetings. They are normally of the type where somebody's car has left the track and injured, in a relatively minor way, another racer or some equipment or some part of the event hardware (rostrums / staging etc) has failed. The injured person or venue owner then claims for loss of pay or repair costs and any inconvenience.

See the bit about club chairmen to see how and where the responsibility lies, but don't forget that YOU the racer is where the initial claim will start, just because someone else is organising things doesn't mean that you are not responsible for your own actions.

The National Racer

Claims resulting from National's are generally an exaggerated version of the club types. The accidents tend to be faster and more severe for two reasons, the cars are travelling faster and there is normally an enhanced safety fence / safety procedure which the accident has managed to overcome. However there are proportionally less claims, probably because the safety systems manage to contain 90% of the problem. Again the ultimate responsibility is the race organiser/BRCA Steward, but as with the club racer the individual is always responsible for their actions.

The Race Director / Club Chairman

This is where the buck stops. At all meetings other than Nationals where the rules state 'BRCA Steward' all claims will involve the Club Chairman or the Race Director. In the event of any claim this person will be involved, as he is the person deemed to be liable for the safety of the event and the persons taking part in it. (This is the same as in any other sport or public event). The race director must be satisfied that everyone is in a safe environment and that additional hazards are not allowed to be created i.e. Closing a track / stopping a race if a track repair is urgently required. However most of the time, the race directors / club Chairman's role is just to confirm the basic facts about the accident, to collaborate the claim and to confirm any other issues that may have had a bearing on its outcome.

Big Meetings – Nationals & Above

The buck here rests securely with the 'BRCA Steward' that is the highest ranking committee member present. It is their responsibility to ensure that all 'reasonable precautions' are taken to ensure the racers and the public's safety, if they have any doubt they will halt the meeting until the problem has been resolved. Again the potential problems are just increased from the club situation with the added questions that large numbers of the public can cause.

Marshalling

At all the above meetings (apart from the fun user of course)

Marshalling is an accepted part of our sport, we race and then we marshal is the built in ethos, though of course ability and age are sometimes taken into consideration.

It is also accepted that racing tracks, of all sizes, are dangerous places to be, however somebody will determine a safe place to marshal from (it may be self determined at a club or by an official at a National – it doesn't matter) while you are at your marshal post/point the insurance cover applies. But when YOU decide to leave that post and retrieve a car then do be aware that YOU have made that decision – it's then your responsibility to keep yourself safe. You cannot blame and therefore claim off yourself, when you get it wrong.

If you read nothing else in the Handbook, read the General Rules.

Race Equipment (batteries, motors etc)

There is only ONE BRCA rule regarding equipment that is applicable to the insurance cover. General Rule 13, Vehicle Scope –

The BRCA will not recognise a model vehicle as being suitable for radio control that is more than any of these measurements; 1 meter long, 20kg in weight or a maximum of 30cc engine capacity.

That's It.

All too often I get emails / phone calls – sometimes from quite experienced people - asking (for example) "will the use of XYZ non homologated batteries invalidate the insurance"?

Nope.

Homologation lists are for Nationals and Sanctioned Events use.

A club can choose to run to them if it so wishes, but that's up to them, but either way round they have no effect on the insurance cover what-so-ever at any level of event, including the nationals too – failing scrutineering wouldn't invalidate your cover for example.

Anybody tells you different point them at this document or ask them to check.

Getting this cover:-

If you're reading this as a BRCA member you already have it, if not then read on: -

You may already have it anyway, if you have public liability insurance for anything else it may possibly cover you, but please check as most of the time it will not, and ensure you mention 'Radio Controlled Cars' and not just 'Model Cars' as there is a huge difference to the layman.

It may come with the building your club hires, if it does it probably only covers the racers whilst in the building, sounds daft I know, but the club members concerned need to know they have no cover when using their vehicles elsewhere.

Insure the club, this works fine and most high street brokers can arrange this, ensure that the club members are covered as individuals (see points above) and be careful if it appears cheap. One local club found out in the worst way that their cover was as a 'model car club' i.e for building Plastic kits and not for 'Racing Radio Controlled Model Cars'

Join the BRCA as an individual, or by joining an Affiliated club, or by Affiliating your club, we are not insurance experts but our brokers are!

As a individual all you need to do is contact the membership secretary who will send you a form for you to fill in, return it with your small payment and you are covered until the end of the year (Jan to Dec). You are now insured to use / race your car anywhere in the UK.

Affiliating a club is a time consuming task for club officials (no more, probably less, than any other good insurance though), however the affiliation scheme covers the club officials and its members, (This protects all those mums, dads and other club members who don't race), wherever they may be racing and for all aspects of the sport. This method is how most clubs now do their insurance it is generally cost effective (High street policies tend to be quite expensive). Also there is the added bonus of not only do our brokers know exactly how our sport works, but of course you get the benefits of BRCA membership thrown in!

Insurance is a spectacularly boring part of our exciting sport, but it is vital to its continued success, and it isn't a subject that is going to go away. At some point you will either be involved or see something that will make you realise its worth, just ensure that you realise how worthwhile it is AFTER you have it.

Other General insurances

Between the largest club with its own circuit and the smallest local club meeting in a local pub on the first Wednesday in the month, there exists such a range of organisations that it is quite impractical to produce a check list of all the general insurances which a club may need. This is, however, a subject to which the Club Secretary (or Treasurer) should give some thought and there are fundamentally two ways of tackling the problem. Firstly, it is possible that a club will have at least one member who is an Insurance Broker or works for an Insurance Company and it would be sensible to discuss the problem with them. Secondly, the topic of General Insurances is something which it is worth including once a year on the Agenda for a Committee Meeting, to give the Club Committee the opportunity of reviewing the subject. The following list is a guide to what's available not definitive, it will perhaps assist in indicating the sort of areas which should be considered.

All risks insurance

- This type of insurance can be used to cover equipment against all risks of physical loss or damage. You will need to draw up a list of items of equipment together with their values. Cover can include loss or damage while they are temporarily in the hands of holders and equipment may be insured either at specific premises or anywhere in the United Kingdom. Some equipment used in connection with events race timing equipment may present some difficulties.

Fire and special perils

- If a club is fortunate enough to own its own club house or other premises, it is clearly advisable to insure the building and its contents. Both the cost and the scope of cover will be dependent on the individual circumstances. Environment, type of construction and nature and value of contents can all affect the underwriting of this Risk.

Employers' liability

- If a club actually employs someone, they are required by Law to hold insurance to indemnify them in respect of liability which they may have to their employee(s) for injuries arising in the course of their employment.

Conclusion

This Guideline can only cover the basics of insurance and perhaps the most important thing is to know your limitations, if in doubt ask a professional, don't find out you got it wrong when it's too late.

Guideline 8

Liaising with the BRCA

The BRCA is the controlling body for radio controlled model motor sport within the UK.

The International Controlling body in Europe is EFRA (European Federation Radio Automobiles), they mainly concern themselves with the organisation of International Grand Prix's and the European Championship.

World Championships are allocated by IFMAR, this group is made up of representatives from EFRA, ROAR (America), FEMCA, (Far East, Australia etc) FAMAR (Everybody else!)

The BRCA is constructed in the following format:-

The Executive is made up of:-

Chairman

Vice Chairman

Secretary

Treasurer

Membership Secretary

Public Relations Officer

Club Liaison Officer

Events Co-Ordinator

EFRA / IFMAR Liaison Officer

Child protection Officer

Plus the Chairman & Secretary from each of the sections.

Attached is an extract from Circuit Chatter "The Structure of your sport" this gives an insight into the roles of the above individuals plus who you should contact with your queries. Some of these posts will not have names alongside as this is being prepared just before an AGM, they may have also changed by the time you get round to reading this book, check in the front of the Handbook for the correct names.

The Chairman - chairman@brca.org

The Chairman will deal with any query that one of the other committee members hasn't been able to deal with or has referred to him, don't start here unless you feel the issue is very complicated or very delicate.

The Vice Chairman - vicechair@brca.org

The Vice Chair is essentially the chairman's right hand man; his role is to assist the chairman as necessary, so problems for him should be delegated by the Chairman.

Secretary - secretary@brca.org

The secretary is the person to whom all correspondence, other than membership information, should be sent, if you have an item for discussion at an executive meeting send it here.

Treasurer - treasurer@brca.org

Deal's with all aspects of the association's financial arrangements, the administration of the insurance, relationships with the MSA and Sports England if you have questions about these issues send it here.

Membership Secretary – membership@brca.org

The membership secretary deals with the administration of the membership, if you have a question about your membership card, or want to request info about club affiliation etc, send it here.

Public Relations Officer – pro@brca.org

The Public Relations Officer arranges the major publicity events the association conducts and will assist section officials and clubs in their PR efforts – want some help to promote your club start here.

Club Liaison - clubliaison@brca.org

Deals with the queries from clubs, could be any subject, and as diverse as help with access to grant information, through to problems with a members behaviour and anything in-between, the distribution of this publication also supporting the Area Club Rep's.

Media Officer – media@brca.org

Any items for publication on either websites or via our Ezine should be sent here, also liaises with section officials to compile all publications

Events & I.T. Support – events@brca.org

The events & I.T. support officer co-ordinates the major events the association attends and advises on our I.T. from the website right through to race timing.

EFRA / IFMAR Liaison Officer – efra@brca.org

The EFRA / IFMAR Liaison Officer represents the association in its dealings with the two bodies responsible for the European and World Championship events.

Child Protection Officer – cpo@brca.org

The CPO will help clubs with any issues relating to child protection, due to the nature of this it may be prudent to just email a contact phone number initially.

Section Officials

Other than these individuals the committee of the BRCA is made up of the Chairman and Secretary of the individual sections.

If you have a question about a particular class of racing the best course of action is to find the official who lives nearest to you and give them a call.

Please note that it is section officials who deal with all aspects of the racing conducted within that section, if you have a complaint or wish to appeal against a decision you must start with the section secretary, and the matter will be discussed at their next committee meeting. If they feel unable to deal with it or you are not satisfied with their response then it can be referred to the executive to deal with.

The executive committee normally meet about 6 times a year to discuss how each of the sections are progressing, to discuss any problems they would like assistance with, and to discuss the progress of the executive officials (Chairman, Vice Chair etc)

Now we know who to talk to I will try to give you an insight into what you get, what's available, and how problems are dealt with.

It's often heard 'The BRCA do nothing for me', this can normally be translated into two area's:-

- 1) I don't know what the BRCA does for me.
- 2) I don't know how to get the BRCA to do something for me.

The first point to remember is that there isn't any great big organisation anywhere playing God, we don't have plush offices, company cars or expense accounts, what we do have is a collection of unpaid volunteers who give up their time to ensure that our sport continues to grow and be run in as co-ordinated a manner as possible for us all to enjoy.

A. What you pay for:-

As a member your money is essentially spent in these areas:-

- 1) The provision of information (Handbook & other publications). This represents about 50% of your fee.
- 2) Your Insurance (Public Liability cover to £10m). This represents about 15%
- 3) Advertising & P.R. we need to continually inform the public about what we all do, this is another 15%
- 4) The running of the association (Postage, stationary etc). This represents about 15%
- 5) The costs of the sections, these run the championships for the various classes is the final 5%

These percentages vary slightly from year to year but as you can see the vast majority of your membership fee is spent ensuring that you know what is going on and that you are insured to compete (If you want to know more about insurance see the previous chapter)

Make sure you receive what you have paid for, if your membership card or handbook doesn't turn up get in touch and then check your emails plus the Association website. Lots of people don't bother, and then complain that they didn't know such and such was happening. If you don't take the trouble to find things out then don't be surprised when you get left out.

The Handbooks normally come out at the end of February / early March.

The Nationals (& Higher!)

We can be very proud of the standard of race meetings that are run in the UK, whilst nothing is ever perfect, and I'm sure there are people reading this already mentally criticising a recent meeting, the events that are run are generally among the best in the world, the standard of competition you will find at a UK national is the very best you will come across, get involved!, these meetings are for all of us to enjoy, it doesn't matter if you come first or last as long as you enjoy your days racing, if you haven't raced at one yet give it a go!

An official from each section spends long hours, and occasional sleepless nights if dealing with Australia!, organising British teams to compete at European and World Champs, these teams are selected from the results of National Championships and give you the opportunity to compete to decide just who is the very best.

Facilities

The BRCA has a huge wealth of knowledge, it doesn't matter what your question is, it could be as simple as where to race, to as complicated as the implications of business rates on permanent race tracks etc. All you need to do is aim your question at the right person (and at the right time)

Notes:-

Guideline 9

Liasing with Other Clubs

There are several good examples of clubs working with their neighbours to good effect - whether it is the sharing of a venue, jointly promoting a large event or simply coming together to improve attendances.

These benefits of working together are most evident in the various regional championships that have appeared such as the TORC series.

The benefits of the clubs working together are evident in:-

- Promotion of regional championships & national meetings.
- Co-ordination, control and publicity of local fixture lists.
- Liaison with statutory and other agencies (to include Sports Councils, Local Authorities)
- Liaison with other sports and community based organisations.
- Local appointment of championship co-ordinators to regulate and control championships.

It would be well worth any clubs time in finding out what is going on in their area, ensuring your members know what else is available to them.

It's a widely believed myth that you "shouldn't advertise your competition". It's my belief that the more people can race, the more people race, and the more racers there ultimately are.

Don't bury your head in the sand. Find out what's going on and work towards becoming part of it, it's the outward facing clubs that ultimately prosper.

If there isn't anything in your area start off an inter club championship, if nothing else it's really good fun getting a group from 3 or 4 local clubs to travel to each others event's, say once a month. It also has a knock on effect in that it will broaden the experience of the race organisers and prepare them for the experience of running bigger race meetings.

Guideline 10

Using Information Technology

This Guideline covers:

- A. Benefits
- B. Costs
- C. Applications
- D. Use of the Internet
- E. Publishing the Club Web Site

A. Benefits

Regard a Personal Computer (PC) as a means of storing, changing and presenting documents, information, images and sounds. Regard the Internet as the largest possible publicity medium and library that potentially anyone can access at anytime, anywhere in the world. It is possible to combine the power of the PC and the Internet to enormous advantage. The benefits are:

1. Stored documents can be used to create new or revised documents, which avoids duplication of effort to re-key those parts of documents which have not altered e.g. make changes to last year's document to create this year's.
2. The ease of making changes also encourages higher standards. The look of a printed document influences the reader's first impression . Good presentation will encourage the reader, which may be vital where clubs are seeking to encourage an active membership, or a Proposal is seeking a commercial sponsor.
3. Documents can be automatically checked for accuracy of spelling, the quality of the grammar and credibility of values in the data, etc.
4. Items can be collated from a variety of sources, or individuals, but edited to have a consistent size or form of presentation.
5. E-mail allows easy contribution of articles at any time without the need for transcription from paper.
6. Changes can be made to data, and the implications of changes recalculated quickly and reliably. For example, a spreadsheet can be reused time and time again to perform tedious calculations on different sets of data. Equally, changes to parts of documents can be made and the revised version reproduced quickly without re-inventing the wheel.
7. Shared access to information can be made easier by the exchange of files, e-mail or via the club's Internet web site. It is possible to create a section of the club web site which only the committee can access using a password.

B. Costs

Acquisition is a prime candidate for sponsorship, if you have something to offer in return. Information Technology is a competitive market, requiring high profile advertising. A PC system only costs about the same as a 10cm line advertisement in a Regional Newspaper.... The cost of acquisition will involve not only the hardware, but also the applications software to make the hardware do the tasks required.

Always buy the highest specification system you can afford as three years is reckoned to be the standard life of any PC system before it needs upgrading: such is the pace of improvement.

The Purchase price usually includes a one-year warranty for Parts & Labour. As with all electrical goods, all the maintenance companies will wish to sell you long term maintenance (3 years) paid in advance. Do you know in advance that they will still be trading for the years that you pay for...

Important files should be backed-up frequently: USB sticks are very cheap and backup copies should be kept apart (i.e. another location) from the PC in case of fire, theft or some other problem which damages the PC's hard disk. The club's Internet web site provides an additional method for storing important files.

Printers consume "ink" in some form, usually cartridges or toner packs in the case of high quality laser printers. The actual cost will increase with the quality of the output required, but consumable costs of 1p - 5p per page of A4 are not untypical.

The skills required to use a PC system are a balance between buying products which one volunteer can use to good effect with their existing skills, and its ease of use to allow others to gain the skills necessary to use the chosen system. With voluntary effort involving a range of individuals over time, remember the repeated cost of training new users. Many local evening classes exist and self-help videos can provide training.

Costs of IT products are falling all the time. It is not necessary to purchase all the elements up-front. Establish an acquisition plan in phases, allowing the benefits to pay back each phase before further investment or sponsorship.

C. Applications

Word-Processing at its simplest will allow files to be edited to create new versions, and minimise the amount of typing which needs to be done to prepare letters, Entry Forms, Members Instructions, Newsletters, Sponsorship Proposals, Minutes of meetings, etc.

Spreadsheets allow tables of figures to be automatically calculated, and are the simplest method by which a list of figures can be listed out and compared to others. All offer graphs in addition to tables of figures. Improved management of Clubs can provide early pay-back e.g. Budgets versus Actuals for Event expenditure.

Integrated application packages such as Microsoft Office offer a word Processing, spreadsheet, database, presentation and other applications built into one application suite which works well together. It is easily possible to "import" documents produced with one type of application into another. Microsoft Works is a cheaper alternative to Office and does most things adequately well.

Desk Top Publishing (DTP) is the next logical step from word-processing. The role of DTP is to aid the presentation on a page of text, data and images files. The frequently used commands are therefore associated with cut / paste and photographic layout, and less with the editing and checking of the accuracy of the actual text / data itself (the role of Word-Processing and Spreadsheet software).

Frequent needs for high-impact headings, and the increased use of photographs in documents will mark the need to acquire specialist DTP application software.

Club Treasurers can benefit from the workload saved by a recognised Accounting package although a modern spreadsheet package will provide all the required functionality. Across a series of Events, each using Spreadsheet data, an Accounts package will provide accurate records, balance a variety of accounts, and provide consolidated financial reports normally landed heavily on the shoulders of the keenest or financially-qualified Committee Member.

D. Use of the Internet

Allows access to the world largest searchable dynamic information source for both reading from and publishing to. The Internet is available 24 hours a day, potentially from anywhere in the world.

Allows the sending of messages to anyone with an e-mail address anytime, anywhere in the world. As well as sending basic text, it is easy to 'attach' a document produced by a particular application such as a word processing, spreadsheet package or database. This allows committee members to exchange documents conveniently.

E. Publishing a Club Web Site

Allows the club to reach a constantly growing, enormous audience of potential new members.

Enables existing members to be kept informed about all aspects of its activities: future event calendars should be maintained so that members do not need to telephone committee members. Include map references for event locations.

Allows the club to publicise its events much more widely and cheaply than conventional paper based advertising with no publishing deadlines to comply with.

Can generate extra income from advertisers and sponsors.

Enables a central repository for club documentation, standard forms and archive.

Generates a focal point for the club activities which can be used to advantage with local media and potential sponsors.

Sets the club apart from competing organisations for potential new members: model motor sport has to compete for members along with all the other modern activities on offer.

It is generally agreed that a web site worth having has the following qualities:

It is easily found: there is no point designing a state-of-the-art site if it can not be found: seek advice on how to get your site 'indexed' and 'linked' to. The clubs 'webmaster' should develop links from all the relevant local government sites and those listing clubs and societies. A full directory of Clubs may be found on one the BRCA's site www.brca.org

The site must be kept updated: an out-of-date one is worse than not having one at all. Once the initial site building has been achieved, allow one hour a week for maintenance and development work.

Has the full support of the whole committee. The editor, press officer and public relations officer especially should play a prominent role in contributing to the sites content and development. A full committee meeting dedicated only to the web site should take place early on in its development. The 'webmaster' may be one of these officers or a stand-alone committee post: maybe a member who has expressed an interest in the Internet can be encouraged to take on this relatively new role.

The site is easily navigable and clearly laid out so that all viewers (especially newcomers) will readily find the information they are after: various methods of providing menus and contents lists exist.

The content is interesting, relevant and varied: content is much more important than appearance however the site should be tidy and eye-catching to attract the younger audience.

The site loads quickly: use of graphics and images should be carefully considered as inappropriate use of images substantially increases the time taken for the pages to appear on the screen: the webmaster should seek advice.

Adds 'value' to the club by allowing anyone to discover the character of the club and remove barriers to membership: an on-line membership form is readily achieved.

New material is tagged as such and revision dates are given for existing pages.

Does not make-up for a poor quality club but will turn a good club into a better one.

The mechanism of creating the club's web site from scratch is composed of a few basic steps:

Decide on the contents. Create separate pages for each identifiable topic and provide links to all of these from the 'home page' or front door to the site. Provide a link from each page back to the home page.

Arrange for an 'Internet Service Provider' (ISP) to 'host' the site. A small local ISP often provides a better service than one of the large anonymous multi-national Internet Access Providers: seek advice if possible.

Upload or publish the site contents to the ISP's web server. You will be told the URL or web address for your site.

Publicise the web site address as widely as possible. All club paperwork should have it on, all publicity material, press releases, sponsorship packs etc etc.

Reap the benefits!

Guideline 11

Club Newsletters & Ezines

A club Ezine or newsletter is the most important way of communicating with members; it may often be the only thing some members get for their subscriptions and therefore it should be taken seriously.

- Ideally a newsletter should be published regularly and consistently Speed and topicality may be more important than elegant or expensive production.
- The standard of club newsletters varies enormously and the quality is not necessarily related to a club's size. Standards generally are rising, not least because of modern technology, and a club should monitor what other clubs (as well as other organisations competing for people's leisure time) are producing so that it does not get left looking second rate.
- Enthusiasm is the key requirement and newsletters work best when one person is nominated as the editor. He (or very often she) should ideally be a member of a club's main committee so that he is in touch with all that is happening in the club.
- Although the committee should let the editor have his head, it should give instructions on the presentation expected. Committee members may also be able to use their influence to get advertising and obviously they should be the ones to lay down what is or isn't allowed. What you can charge for ads will obviously depend on the quality and circulation of the publication - all the more reason for making it as good as possible. Don't forget that although taking ads makes a newsletter look more professional, it also means extra effort - take care to ensure that the effort is justified by the extra revenue.
- Decide what flavour you want - elegant or earthy, luxurious or cheap and cheerful. Try to give your newsletter a character of its own although get legal advice if you decide to be deliberately controversial. Avoid four letter words in it, you aren't writing a rag mag and members are difficult enough to recruit without offending any.
- Try to get skilled help in planning the layout and in designing the cover. Even consider drawing up a house style sheet for it, spelling out whether certain words are always hyphenated, capitals always used for others and so on. Your readers may not all notice the consistency but it will add a little something to the quality.
- Be careful with photographs, make sure they are copy-write free, ideally source them from within the club and don't use files that are too large as it'll make the size of the newsletter too big for some recipients email accounts.
- Some clubs successfully use cartoons in publications but they do need care if they are not to look indulgently amateurish.
- Having sorted out the style of the magazine, the editor should then try to PLAN AHEAD. Too often there will be a last minute scramble to get anything out at all, yet a little planning can prevent some of the panic. Christmas will probably come around in December every year ... so why not think of a suitable feature for the December issue several months ahead? A twelve month plan will help an editor balance the publications so that over a year it covers all members' interests.
- Having produced a newsletter to be proud of, it is important to get it to members as quickly as possible.
- Add other interested parties to your circulation list, send them to national enthusiast magazines, local journalists, club sponsors and neighbouring clubs.
- The constant complaint of editors is that they can't get enough material - so this Guideline ends with a list of the items which appear most regularly in club newsletter which may provide one or two ideas.

Possible things to include in a club newsletter

- Contents page
- What it is, eg "The Ezine of the XYZ Model Car Club which does this and that".
- List of officials, addresses, phones and email
- In what form the editor would, ideally, like to receive copy.
- Calendar of events.
- Where the club meets and when.
- "Opinions expressed are not necessarily those of the committee and officials".
- Championship positions and points.
- Editorial.
- Committee news.
- Reports on race meetings.
- Subscription details and a membership application form.
- Photographs (properly captioned).
- Date copy must be received for the next issue.
- Welcome to new members.
- Sales and wants ads for members (usually free).
- Bits of history of the club.
- Letters from members and guests
- News from a key club sponsor.
- Articles about members' cars.
- Club Regalia for sale.

Guideline 12

Promoting a Club

Why Bother?

- People are aware of golf, cricket, football and other sports because they see the premises as they drive around. This is rarely the case with our sport and unless a club promotes itself people may simply not be aware that it exists - and it may find it difficult to recruit new members because promoting a club and recruitment are inextricably linked; the higher the profile, the easier to get new members.
- Clubs should also make an effort to promote themselves because most are “competing” with countless other social and voluntary organisations in their area for media and public attention and, not least, sponsorship.
- The better relations a club has with the local community and the local media, the better chance it has of either limiting adverse publicity, perhaps following an incident on an event, or lobbying e.g. for land for an event.
- Promoting a club needn't be expensive effort and ideas are more important than money.

Doing the work

- If promotion is to be done properly one club member should be put in specific charge of it - promotion should not just be something tagged on to other club jobs.
- It helps if the person has some knowledge of public relations or marketing but this is NOT essential, enthusiasm and common-sense are the most important qualities required.
- The person doing the promotion job should be a member of, or at least attend, committee meetings so that they are fully aware of what is going on.

Style

The person in charge of promotion should, with the main committee, review the overall 'style' of the club and the image it presents to its members and to the general public. For example:

1. Does the club logo need a mild update'?
2. Does the club have a clear style for it's website, notepaper, invoices, business cards, in fact for all media & printed material?
3. Is the membership card attractive and likely to be an aid to recruitment if seen by nonmembers?
4. Use social media to promote a positive image for the club and linked to other local organisations / partners where possible, forums should be closed to members or very well moderated

Recruiting

- A club should have a simple leaflet about itself as an aid to recruitment outlining its activities, where and when it meets and so on; study leaflets in tourist information centres to see what other activities in the area are doing, then at least match their efforts.
- Does the club have a web site? If so, is it kept up to date? Consider how off-putting an out-of-date poster is on a wall - a tired web site is no different. Persuade someone to act as 'web master' with everything connected with the site routed through them.
- Have you put up posters about the club in local shops, libraries etc.?

- Consider special recruitment 'days' where the club puts itself on show and has experts on hand with their cars to explain various aspects of the sport.
- Consider reduced entry fees for new members in their first year as a recruitment aid.
- Committee members should make an effort to welcome new members at club nights. It helps if key club members wear name badges.
- Some clubs have found it helps to give new members a specific 'contact' - someone they can call if they need advice about the club.

Community relations

- A club is, or should be, an integral part of its local community and should be active in this role.
- Is the club listed in the phone book and in any local guides to associations?
- Are club dates put in event diaries kept in most libraries?
- Do club dates appear in 'What's on' features in local newspapers and on local radio stations?
- A club should be represented where possible at town shows, fetes and so on. Is there someone in the club with marketing or exhibition experience who can help with a simple but professional looking display?
- Make sure the club is advertised as widely as possible in the local media – make use of the free publicity available to clubs by writing race reports and submitting them to the sports editor for example?
- Are there any community opportunities for club action which will generate media coverage? The possibilities are endless and if a club doesn't take them, then the media space will be filled by more dynamic local groups.
- If a club is lucky enough to have a club house, can it be offered to charitable groups for use? Is it clean, with up to date display material?
- If you don't have a club house but meet regularly in, say, a local hall, do you have a display board about the club which is kept up to date and acts as an advertisement for the club? Rotaries and Round Tables do this - why not us? Always have recruitment literature available.
- Have you considered reciprocal projects with other, groups in the area?
- Can anyone in the club be persuaded to give talks about the sport and the club to other organisations in the area? Talking to them is a good way of building useful friends and maybe even recruiting new members.

The press

- Don't be afraid of working with the press. There's no magic about it.
- Find out names of motoring journalists and the names of sports editors at ALL morning, evening and weekly papers. One phone call to the switchboard operator of each newspaper will generally be enough to obtain all names. Also ask for editorial e-mail addresses.
- Get to know the local press; invite correspondents to your larger events.
- Know their copy deadlines and picture requirements.

Press releases

- Ideally you should have specially laid out Press Releases, you can set these up as Word templates for example.
- Type press releases in double spacing on one side of the paper only and leave wide margins at each side - all this will give a journalist space to edit a release.
- Keep releases brief and concise and use plain English. Keep sentences and paragraphs short. Avoid jargon - it will simply confuse.
- Spend time reading what is used by newspapers - try to aim to get exactly what you write into the paper without alteration. It is NOT impossible. No press release should really be more than 150 words.

- Put the most important news first - if a journalist shortens a release he is likely to do so from the end.
- Stress any local angle.
- Try to answer Who? What? Why? Where? When? in a press release.
- Try to include a quote e.g. "John Smith chairman of the ABC Model Car Club said..,"
- Don't over plug a sponsor's name in any press release, otherwise the press may throw it in the bin.
- Don't send a flood of press releases otherwise your contacts will ignore them.
- Give a name and contact numbers at the end for further information. Put the date too.
- Keep at least two copies of every release issued. One for your own file ~ the other for any sponsors. List the circulation list on each release filed. Try and make sure you get a cutting of everything. Local libraries are a good source - pages can be photocopied. Identify each cutting with name of publication and date it appeared.

Photographs

- The promotions man should try to get someone in the club to liaise with him to produce a flow of suitable press pictures; these should be as professional as possible with no flowers growing out of people's heads and so on.
- If you get a household name attending an event your at, ring up the local sports editor and discuss the opportunity of arranging a photo-session.
- If photographs are taken of prize winners, have the club badge in the background. If possible the photographer should have checked beforehand exactly where people should stand.
- Send images of a reasonable resolution – 5MP for pictures going into printed media, but down to 1MP for a website, make sure the file is appropriately titled.
- Pictures MUST be sent with a note in the email of what each one refers too – and the names of the people featured in it.
- Make it quite clear that a picture is copyright free - newspapers will be put off if there appears to be any doubt.

Radio and TV

- Although there will be most opportunities with local radio, don't despair of getting a story on local TV - it happens more often than you'd think.
- Try to develop contacts at local stations and keep in touch with them.

Radio and TV need voices as well as news so be prepared for someone in the club ~ who should be properly briefed - to be interviewed. This needn't be the chairman if someone else proves better at it.

- Anyone being interviewed should avoid alcoholic hospitality beforehand and should concentrate and listen to the questions.
- Speak up, be definite and don't ramble.
- If you don't know the answer to something, say so, don't waffle. Avoid jargon.
- Occasionally be prepared for an awkward questions perhaps on environmental issues.
- Keep calm, but don't get too relaxed and on no account lose your temper.
- Be cautious in plugging club sponsors too much. You may not be asked to appear again if you do and too many plugs make poor entertainment anyway.
- Resist the temptation to try too hard to be funny - it probably won't work.

Bad Publicity

- If, despite all your efforts, the club gets bad publicity, avoid over-reacting. Correct important errors but if you charge in with guns blazing about something tucked away in a newspaper on page 5, you may elevate it to even worse publicity on page 1!
- All the efforts of a promotions officer will be undone if club members roar away from a club meeting place late at night and annoy the public. If there is a problem like this stress to members the problems and ask for their co-operation.
- To avoid unnecessarily bad publicity it may be wise for clubs running larger events to hold "what if" crisis planning meetings to discuss the consequences of, say, a serious incident. Be quite clear who can speak publicly on such occasions - off-the-cuff comments by all and sundry may simply mean legal and/or insurance problems later.

Archives

- With many clubs reaching significant birthday milestones, "then and now" stories are proving popular with local newspapers and magazines. These are much easier to arrange if old material is available and clubs should encourage someone to act as "archivist" and contact older members for their memories and, with luck, memorabilia. Local newspaper files may prove useful for stories about the highlights of the club.

For the sake of future generations (when they are celebrating 20th and 30th anniversaries of the club!), keep ALL club magazine, event regulations, committee minutes and so on.

Make contact with the BRCA PRO

Ensure the BRCA pro (pro@brca.org) knows what you are doing, he may be able to help with material, certainly will be able to help with ideas and will certainly ask you to get involved if he's attending any major events in your area.

Guideline 13

Social Functions

Why?

- “All we do is social, why do we need to consider doing anything else?”
- Although a majority of members may be attracted to a club by the thought of competing, a social programme can play a key part in keeping a club strong and lively.
- Anybody who has ever been to lets say a local karting track with their model car club mates will know exactly why these can be beneficial. They have the effect of breaking down the rivalry that can build from initial fun to serious “I must beat him” problems, and of course anything like this is great fun.
- Why not have a Christmas party or similar ? It’s perhaps a bit unusual for a model car club, but why not, other clubs would, as our sport get older and more established perhaps its worth considering a social function. The key - as with competitive events of course - is to plan and pay attention to detail.
- When organising social activities, remember that the way a function is run “says” something about a club and if you invite, say, sponsors (or potential sponsors) or possible new members and an event is a shambles they will hardly be encouraged to support or join you in the future.
- If a club has a healthy social programme with, say, scalextric or kart evenings, it is worth considering a Social Championship which helps to link the events together and build momentum.
- All of the above may sound a little odd, but consider the other activities you or your other committee members take part in, why is our activity any different? It’s probably just because we’ve only been going for 20 odd years and we’re only now growing up!

Guideline 14

Running Larger Events

At last how to actually run a race meeting ? Not quite, later publications of these guidelines might explain specific areas of organisation for particular disciplines of our sport, however when organising any competitive event there are common areas of organisational skills and event structure, whether you are organising a club championship or a national finals day. Above all, a club should go into any event with its eyes wide open on the financial front. This means proper budgeting over costs and entry fees.

The most important aspect of any event is the management structure, its chain of command and responsibility. Too often good events are marred by the "one man band" approach, where an official, is trying to run the whole event with little help or assistance from other club members. As a club you must ensure that this does not happen, and this section of the manual should help to increase your awareness of the importance of the various key positions necessary within all events.

The size of the Event Committee or Management Team depends very much on the size, status and nature of the event. With small club events it is possible to combine certain roles and areas of responsibility. However, one overriding condition must be realised by all those who accept positions on the event committee: they should be prepared not to race in it!

The key positions for any event are, the Race Director, the Secretary of the Meeting, and the timekeeper. This is the very minimum number of nominated officials required to organise any event. On the day of course do not forget that you will also require helpers for the nominated officials, in relation to the events size. In addition you will also need to nominate the Steward. Whilst the Steward is a nominated official, his duties and responsibilities do not start until the meeting itself, so we will explain their important contribution later.

Most events involve the timing of competitors, so you will require a Timekeeper. Other important officials to be considered dependant upon the discipline being organised, are Chief Marshal, Referees, Transmitter Control, Pit Lane Observers etc.

Race Director

The Race Director has overall responsibility for the event, its organisation and running on the day. He shall be responsible for the conduct of all officials, competitors and spectators, and for the event's compliance with BRCA Regulations and any legislation as appropriate. The Race Director is also responsible for hearing all protests not capable of being dealt with by the timekeeper or scrutineer and for any post event inspections of cars or components.

Ideally he/she should delegate as much as possible to other responsible officials in order not to be swamped by the nitty gritty aspects of the day. Only then, and with a strong co-ordinated team will your event run smoothly and become a pleasure to be at and run.

During the period prior to the event the Race Director should be in regular contact with the other members of the Event Committee, especially the Secretary of the Meeting. Ideally this should be done through regular meetings of the Event Committee, thereby providing a forum to monitor the event's progress and to discuss and overcome problems. He/she should make regular reports to the club and its committee and solicit additional help and resources as needed. Remember that you will need help on the day and cultivating club members' enthusiasm for your event at club nights will help to motivate members and their friends to give their time to your venture.

Secretary of the meeting

This job as its title suggests is an administrative and supportive position to the Race Director. Whilst not appearing as glamorous and attractive as some other duties, a good secretary is absolutely essential to ensure that all paperwork is correct, that any equipment necessary has been ordered and is available to the officials who need it, and that entries are received and processed.

The Secretary will ensure that the entry forms are printed and widely circulated as appropriate to the events status, and will normally be the official to coordinate enquiries from prospective entrants.

Some really large events appoint an Entries Secretary to liaise solely with entries, sending out bulletins and other pre-event paperwork. This releases the Secretary of the Meeting to concentrate on the other duties already outlined.

The scrutineer

The Scrutineer, or Chief Scrutineer is responsible for checking that all cars, comply with BRCA Rules in respect of eligibility and safety.

For small events it may be possible for one official to fulfil these duties, but commonly at larger events where there are more things to check, the Chief Scrutineer will be assisted by Assistant Scrutineers.

Prior to the event the Scrutineer should have an input to the drafting of the confirmation of entry if anything is out of the ordinary and be available to assist the Secretary of the meeting with technical and eligibility questions from prospective entrants.

Once the event has begun, and scrutineering is under way, the Chief Scrutineer must remain available to advise the Race Director on any matters that may arise e.g.: protests regarding eligibility.

The timekeeper

The Timekeeper as the title suggests, operates and is responsible for the equipment and method of recording the times of competitors. He/she will report directly to the Race Director and act upon his/her instructions. The Timekeeper will at big meetings be assisted by Assistant Timekeepers and will be responsible for collating the results of the event.

The chief marshal

At large events (Euro's and Worlds) its sometimes required to have a Chief Marshal , the Chief Marshal is responsible for co-ordinating the marshals essential to the running of your event. The Chief Marshal will ensure that the right people are at each post and that all positions are covered adequately, carrying out the instructions of the Race Director.

The Steward

The buck stops here!

On the day the Steward is the most senior officials present, hence is quite often also the Race Director technically, he/she does not run the event, but oversees the entire meeting, both the organisers and the competitors.

The responsibilities of the Steward start by ensuring that the Race Director and the organisation team are running the event to the requirements of the BRCA as contained in the Handbook, and to any legislation that may affect the event.

The steward is also responsible for ensuring the track and venue are safe for the class being raced, if he's not happy the event won't start, remember it's his responsibility, remain calm if something needs fixing he's only doing his job.

Basic requirements for a Steward are impartiality, common sense, experience in the running of events, and a sound working knowledge of the Rules.

If it's a National event it's important for a club to establish proper relations with the BRCA Steward. To do this:

1. Call the section chairman well before the event, ask him if he's attending if not find out who from the section is going to be the Steward in his absence, and ensure you know of any particular requirements they have or recent problems that have occurred.

2. Remember the Steward has to be satisfied that the track is safe before the event can commence, if you're starting practice at 8.00, ensure he knows as he'll need to be there before hand.
3. If it's the first time he's been to your track make time to introduce him to your other Club Officials and walk with him around the important areas well before the start.
4. Assume he has stewarded before, has done your job long ago and knows most of the tricks. Remember the steward is your friend make an effort to get along !

This then is a brief summary of the key officials required to run an event and their areas of responsibility. Not all will be necessary for every type of event and there are of course other positions which are not covered here.

There is of course more to event management and organisation than just choosing the right people. As with any form of recreation that requires the organisation of an event, there is the inevitable paperwork and bureaucracy.

This then is the typical procedure for organising an event:

1. First you will decide on the type of event and the date you wish to run, at this stage you will probably only have an idea within the club as to who will Direct the event.
2. Then the date will be submitted to the Section or Championship organiser for their dates meeting. Once the date has been ratified, not clashing with a similar event preferably, you can then actually make a start on the event happening!
3. The club committee will select the persons to organise the event and confirm the date in your club calendar. At this stage you should have confirmed the venue.
4. The event Management Team should now be finalised and confirmed.
5. Start drafting the entry form for the event, ensure anything you put on the form complies with the rules for the event you are running, if in doubt check.
6. Now you may issue your entry form to prospective competitors. Obviously to give as many competitors chance to plan their programme, the preceding sections should be completed as early as possible to achieve the maximum period for entries to be accepted.
7. Forms now being available, entries should start to be received by the Secretary of the meeting.
8. Whilst the Secretary is busy acknowledging entries the Race Director should be finalising the necessary equipment, timing equipment, track markers and any other equipment as necessary to the running of the event.
9. As the day draws ever nearer the issue of confirmation of entries needs to take place along with the issue of any Final Instructions.
10. The Event.
11. After the event you will need to collate and issue results. This will be done on the day and don't forget to send them to the championship co-ordinator if appropriate
12. The Steward may need to complete a report form and submit this to section secretary at some larger events.
13. Hold a debriefing meeting with key people so that you learn by your experience.

This concludes the general points for running competitive events, subsequent Guideline publications may cover particular disciplines, but the final hint for a successful event is this:

If in doubt ask, need help ask, there is lots and lots of experience out there, make use of it, everyone will then know exactly what they're doing, it ensures a smooth running day, smooth running events are good events.

Guideline 15

Recruiting and Training Officials

The number of Officials required for anything other than a basic club event should not be under-estimated. Whilst a Club night may run effectively with only one or two, an Electric Touring Car National may actually need around a dozen and the last Worlds run in the UK had a crew of 32!

- Recruitment of new Officials should be given a high priority by every Club these people are volunteers who are prepared to give their time freely, and many new club helpers of today will become the senior officials of tomorrow, so once you recruit them, do make them feel useful and involve them as part of the club team.
- Recruitment possibilities are endless, but include by word of mouth, personal contact at events, club website, local media contact (radio/newspapers), library and college notice-boards etc. However no matter what system is used it's not as important as keeping hold of the officials you already have !
- Whilst most officials will gain their experience through 'on the job' training on events it's not a bad idea to actually have training sessions, especially for race control. Certainly if holding a large meeting a couple of evening spent in the local pub, discussing exactly who's doing what and making sure everyone knows how, will reap huge rewards.
- In the future Club Officials will be provided with the opportunity to attend seminars or workshops which will be organised by the BRCA to exchange information and widen understanding of the sport. Progression from Club Official to BRCA Section Official is an area where new blood is always necessary and the demand will grow as sections progress.

It's vitally important that we all recognise how important our volunteer officials are and we should never forget these people give up their time so we can have our fun.

Guideline 16

Sponsorship

- A club hoping to attract support for an event or championship must recognise that sponsorship is, or should be, a two way business deal, not charity or patronage. Of course local organisations may support a club for other than full-blooded commercial reasons but nevertheless a club must aim to offer value for money.
- Clubs should also recognise that finding sponsorship may not (in fact almost certainly will not) be easy as there are countless other sports and activities out there seeking support. And sponsorship practices change; for example a few years ago TV programme sponsorship was rare, now it is commonplace and sucks up money which would otherwise go elsewhere.
- Although, as with a lot of selling, there is no guarantee of success at the end of the day, your chances will be improved if you plan your approach carefully. The sales skills required are the same as any other selling activities so you may benefit from reading general sales books
- First, consider what you have to offer and if it can be improved. If you seek sponsorship for an event would it be more appealing if part of a championship? Can you get a local radio or newspaper interested? If you have a club room or rostrum available for sponsors, is it time it had a quick coat of paint.
- Next, list all the possible benefits to a potential sponsor; these could include: title to the event, company name on competing cars and official media (such as a event website); advert in programme, banner advertising opportunities around the track, opportunity to organise displays and promotions around the event; hospitality opportunities; benefits from local TV and other media coverage. Plus, of course, the community relations benefits of supporting a local club in the local community.
- If an event attracted media coverage in previous years whether in local newspapers or television, mention this and keep copies of press material to show to potential sponsors.
- Next prepare a draft proposal including:
 - a. An introduction to the event and the organisers.
 - b. Specific details about the event where, when, how many entrants/ spectators etc.
 - c. Specific benefits as listed above.
 - d. Possible media coverage.
 - e. A final summary possibly mentioning how much money is sought and how it will be spent.

By completing this exercise you will have a clear picture of what you are offering to a sponsor and you should then be able to deal with any queries.

- Once you have drafted the basic information, try to get a hard-nosed business friend to take an outsider's look and play devil's advocate and based on this, put it into a more formal presentation. This could range from a straight letter (well typed of course) to a brochure, to a PowerPoint presentation with video - it all depends on how much sponsorship you are after, what you are offering and to some extent the size of company you are approaching.
- The next stage is to approach potential sponsors but before contacting companies first consider 'who you know' because personal contact is one of the most effective ways of raising sponsorship. The Committee of a club and other influential members should be roped in to help in the search. Strings are meant to be pulled, so pull them.
- Contact the BRCA PRO he will be able to advise if any of the national companies on your list are "no go" areas either because somebody else has beaten you to it, or even help you out with contact names in some case, it will certainly help you in avoiding treading on someone else's toes or having yours trod on!
- If this fails and you have to approach companies cold then cast your net widely and plan your approach in a businesslike way. And don't give up - if the first approach to a company results in a negative response, perhaps you can change the proposal slightly and go back later a second or third time, when the outcome may be more positive.

- The aim of a written approach should be to fix a meeting at which a club can present its proposals.
- Don't go to such meetings mob handed but do go with people who are articulate and can present a case well.
- Rehearse the presentation, preferably in front of someone used to such proposals.
- Don't waffle - if you have 30 minutes allocated for a meeting then don't make the presentation longer than 10 minutes so that there is time for discussion.
- Don't use R.C. jargon - not everyone will understand it.
- Don't promise what you can't deliver - that's a sure way of having a disappointed sponsor (and maybe even litigation).
- How much should a club ask for? This obviously depends on the importance of the event which is why involving the local media will enhance the value. Try to relate the sum you seek to something e.g. 'that would only buy you two ads in the XYZ paper'. Remember you can negotiate downwards on price but rarely upwards.
- If you reach an agreement with a sponsor, put things in writing, either a simple letter of intent or a formal contract - this will help avoid "who said what" arguments later if things go wrong or a key person on the sponsor's side moves on. Incidentally, if a sponsorship deal does break down or a sponsor decides to quit at the end of the contract period, don't slag them off in the local press. All that will do is deter other potential sponsors.
- If the club is registered for VAT (or will be above the limit when the sponsorship limit is taken into account) then VAT will need to be charged and provided for in the agreement.
- Look after your sponsor to ensure the partnership continues in years to come. It is much easier to keep a sponsor than to have to search for new ones. This does not generally mean taking your sponsor out for expensive meals, but simply involving them and helping them achieve their own objectives. If your sponsor is not actively involved in the event, it is in your club's interest to at least keep him or her informed.
- Think what extra you can offer sponsors. A simple plaque presented to them at the event may help make them feel welcome and that much more part of the club.
- Above all, don't take the money and then forget a sponsor.

Guideline 17

Club Affiliation

What, Why & How

What?

Club Affiliation is where your club is formally part of the British Radio Car Association.

The Club – and all its members - join the association, thereby ensuring that everybody is part of the Association and receives the appropriate benefits.

The Association is purely its members, there is no other holding body, we are – collectively - it.

Why?

The reason club affiliation exists is to ensure that everybody competing at a club has Public Liability Insurance in place, both as a competitor and as an organiser (see the notes on Insurance to see why this last bit is vitally important)

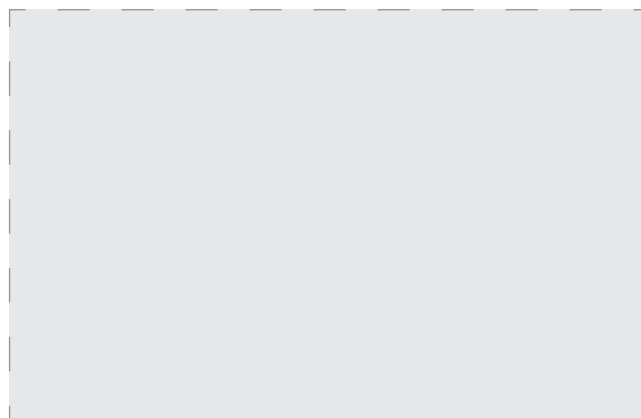
However in Addition:-

It has the effect of identifying the club as a separate entity from its members, so if there is an incident the resulting paperwork can be issued to the 'XYZ Model Car Club' and not in the name of the Club Chairman or the person who was running the meeting at the time.

This last point can be very worrying for people when legal documents land on the doormat with their name all over it and can impact on things like their ability to get finance while the case is going on, being that little bit to one side can be a much more comfortable place to be.

You will therefore receive a membership card in the name of the club – this is Important, keep it with your other club documents.

Or Fasten it here:-



How?

It's very simple to complete this process but does require some basic checks at your club.

To start the process off simply download the forms off the BRCA website and complete the free club affiliation form, this will ask you to identify your four Club Officials / Senior Members.

Send the form in, as long as your club officials have joined or you have processed their membership via the Club Membership management tool, and the form is complete – your Affiliation will be processed.

If for any reason any of the four haven't completed their application, the process will be paused and we'll contact you.

At your club your club secretary / membership officer needs to then ensure that all your members and any official in any way what-so-ever connected with the clubs RC racing activities have joined the Association. It is vitally important that everybody has this box ticked – you HAVE to know that everybody taking part in the activity no matter if they're driving or an Official are either BRCA members or can provide the club with proof of Public Liability Insurance from somebody else.

Do NOT fall into the trap of missing this step out.

Q&A

Q - Do all our Club officials need to be Members?

A - Yes – unless your RC Club is part of a larger organisation such as a town Sports Club, in which case the officials of the RC Car Committee will do.

Q - What about Visitors?

A - Newcomers to the SPORT are permitted 3 visits to your club before they need to join; experienced racers from other nearby clubs MUST be members to race with you.

Q – We want to go to the local town show is this OK?

A – Perfectly; the membership cover is for the person as well as the club so it's fully transportable and covers public displays too.

Q – I want to race at another club, do I need to join them?

A – Not from a BRCA point of view No, your BRCA membership travels with you, but that Club may insist you join it; that is their choice.

IF in any doubt **ask** – membership@brca.org

Guideline 18

First Aid

Introduction

This Guideline is not meant to be an exhaustive manual. It has been written to make you think about what you should do and outlines the steps involved. It does not contain detailed description of techniques and manoeuvres necessary, these should be learnt at proper training sessions, such as those organised by St John Ambulance Brigade, Red Cross, St Andrew's Cross and the Order of Malta.

Clubs may consider running this guideline in their magazines to spread the advice as widely as possible.

Remember in any sport most accidents occur around the activity itself, not directly from it, just because we race model cars doesn't mean this topic shouldn't be taken seriously.

Personal safety

This is the most important factor! You do not help a situation by becoming a casualty yourself.

STOP AND THINK - THEN ACT!

Protect yourself and the scene first!

Assess the situation:

What type of assistance is required, how are you going to summon this help? In any sport as elsewhere it is often better to spend a few minutes evaluating the nature of the problem and then present concise and accurate information. This will enable those in charge to provide the correct help more quickly.

First Aid

There is no substitute for practice ~ think seriously about a first aid course.

In general the more noise a casualty is making, the less likely they are to die in the next few minutes. Therefore, when you make your initial assessment look for quiet casualties and inspect them first.

In these circumstances people die from airway problems or loss of blood in the short term.

Airway

1. Is casualty conscious - if talking must be breathing.
2. If not, are they breathing - feel for warm breath coming from mouth or nose.
3. No breathing - clear airway (remember this should be a two person task with neck stabilisation) maintain airway - head tilt/jaw thrust.

CARE - unconscious accident victims may have a neck injury - twisting and flexing the neck are potentially dangerous. Extension of the head and neck should be kept to the minimum necessary to maintain the airway.

4. Still no breathing - then artificial ventilation (mouth to mouth respiration).

Bleeding

Obvious bleeding may be controlled by direct pressure upon the wound. Use a clean pad, handkerchief, etc. Remember that blood is potentially infective so try to avoid contaminating your skin if possible, especially if you have an open wound or cut yourself. Elevation of a bleeding limb, if possible, will also help.

Do not try to apply tourniquets or clamp bleeding vessels.

Spinal injuries

Unconscious patients; those complaining of pain in the back or neck; and those complaining of abnormal sensation (e.g. pins and needles) in the hands or feet, may have a spinal injury. Apart from manoeuvres necessary to establish an airway they should not be moved without medical or rescue advice.

Burns

Small burned areas (e.g. hand, arm or leg) are best treated by the immediate application of cold, clean water, this will reduce pain and halt the burning process).

Clothes contaminated with chemicals should be removed and the surface washed with large quantities of clean water.

Burned limbs may be placed in a clean plastic bag to reduce fluid loss.

Fractures

These are broken bones, generally obvious by pain at site. There may be deformity of the limb, without medical advice it is generally better not to attempt to straighten the limb. If medical or rescue help is not readily available splinting may reduce discomfort. Remember that the sound limb or patient's body, with some padding (e.g. clothing), makes a useful temporary splint.

Summary

FIRST COMES PERSONAL SAFETY

Then

Remember - quiet casualties first.

Act calmly as this will help everyone - don't be afraid to stop and think. If you are injured the last thing you need is several people running around like headless chickens, shouting at the tops of their voices.

Reassurance, this is perhaps the most important. Introduce yourself, explain who you are and that help is coming. Talk to the casualty and try to gain their confidence.

If you wish to know more, consider a first aid course. These are run by most of the voluntary societies.

Guideline 19

Racing & Track Safety

At last we've got to the bit where it actually says how to run a race ?

Well no not quite, I don't actually intend to cover the topic of running the races within this guide, there are far too many variations. I do hope that the individual sections will in the near future produce specific guidelines of their own so a club can download the bits relevant to themselves.

This chapter is concerned with all the bits that go on around the track, on a race day, but not actually the cars themselves.

First we must ask ourselves a question: -

What the difference between Brands Hatch and Mendip as seen by an outsider to our sport?

Daft question that isn't it? One is a really huge track, covering dozens of acres of land, used for racing F1 cars, dozens of competitors, loads of spectators, lots of financial investment, the other one is a model car track, a lot smaller, used for racing scale models, nothing in common.

Or is there? We still get dozens of competitors, in relation to the track size we still get a fair few spectators, and some of the cars aren't much slower (anybody seen a 2CV race.?)

In actual fact there is no technical difference between the two, in actual legal terms both are "motor sport facilities" this is a very important mental step to take, we must be aware how are sport is viewed by the outside world.

We must be seen to operate our "motor sport facilities" in the same manner as full size circuits operate theirs.

Now that somewhat shocking statement has settled in we can begin to look at what that actually means

- 1) We must operate in the same manner but not to the same degree.
- 2) We must keep up to date with changes in the methods of full size motorsport operation, and implement what's relevant.
- 3) We must continue to develop the awareness of our clubs and officials.

If you visited Silverstone or another GP circuit you would, in the main, see the marshals standing in concrete or brick posts which would be behind an armco barrier which in turn would have a gravel trap or other runoff area in front of it. If you went to Oulton Park the Marshal would be stood on a grass bank, still behind armco, but with only 2 metre's of grass between the armco and the track.

The difference is down to **degree of risk**. A GP circuit needs to contain an accident resulting from a car travelling at over 200 mph and cornering at up to 4g. The degree of risk at Oulton Park is considerably lower and hence the safety precautions required are lower, our activity works on exactly the same basis so we need to:-

- 1) Assess the Degree of Risk
- 2) Implement safety precautions as appropriate
- 3) Ensure our rules reflect this.
- 4) Stay aware of any changes in the way full size assess the degree of risk initially.

The Good News is we do this already, it's just most people aren't aware of it, some need reminding, and some need training.

Tracks

Most of the above comes down to the application of common sense, a massively undervalued commodity, fortunately most of our sections have over the years had enough people with enough of it to develop their own procedures. What we do actually mirrors full size theory close enough for us to pass inspection and allow us to get our public liability insurance, however here are the track guidelines a club chairman or steward should go through: -

- 1) All model car tracks must have a barrier between the cars and any one else, except marshals and officials, i.e only Marshals and officials are allowed on a track when a race is in progress.
- 2) If the cars are a higher degree of risk then the marshals should have clearly defined posts and some degree of protection.

You're probably thinking "that's ok at my outdoor circuit there's a good strong fence all the way round" or "at my club we just lay the track in the middle of the sports hall floor the outside edge is just the edge of the carpet"

Which is ok ? probably neither, definitely only one!

The "good strong fence" is probably ok, but you need to check it for gaps, can a car go through it, under it, is any of it broken? You have made the assessment that you need it, therefore it must be in good repair, to often I see excellent fences all round the track except the pits, why? Is it fair game to hit people working on their cars? (Note: Pit Lanes are part of a race track)

The indoor circuit with no outside barrier is an all too common site, "its ok though isn't it because the cars are only electric ones.." this may be true but it's a very misguided view, more accidents happen in this way than any other. However what we don't necessarily need is "the Good Strong Fence" what we do need is an outside barrier that will contain accidents within the confines of the circuit to an **acceptable degree of risk**. This degree varies with the cars being raced, from 75 mm plastic tubing for 1/12 circuit cars through the same in timber for 1/12 stock cars to something more substantial for off road buggies for example especially if there are jumps. (Remember anything that causes a vehicle to leave the road surface might need a stronger or higher barrier if its near the track edge.)

As you can see it's very much a decision for either the club chairman or the event steward to make, but it actually isn't that hard to do, it does just come down to common sense. Of course this can be very hard and occasionally expensive to implement, but think of it like this, what the potential problems if you don't do it and something goes wrong?

Fortunately in our sport the track is most of the degree of risk, if you have done your assessment of that, and you're happy that the barriers will contain the cars, you can move on to the other area's of potential problems: -

Rostrums

Rostrums are a huge area of concern that could take up, and indeed one day might, an entire Guideline on their own, for the time being work on this theory.

- 1) Ensure that anything you use is being used for the purpose for which it was designed, or is safety inspected by a 3rd party (i.e HGV lorry trailers are ok as have an MOT certificate)
- 3) If it's constructed for you, e.g. scaffolding, ensure the builder has their own insurance cover.
- 4) Don't build anything yourself over 1.8 metre's tall to the drivers feet, above this it should have a safety certificate etc, preferably don't build anything yourself!
- 5) If you're doing a proper building, get planning permission and ensure the council know exactly what it's going to be used for.

Again it's the application of Common Sense that prevails.

The Pits

Never has one word more accurately described reality!

Most pits are a health and safety nightmare waiting to happen, we've all seen quite nasty injuries in the pits, from people cutting the end off their thumb, to burns from soldering irons, to superglue in places it shouldn't be, most of this is down to people getting it wrong, this we can do nothing about.

What we can do is ensure we have the kit to hand when they do,

Do you know where your First Aid Kit is?

Do you know where your Fire Extinguisher is?

You have of course got both of these and an Accident book to record their use in...

After this it's just a bit more common sense to be applied, ask people to fasten down extension leads when they can, discourage car batteries if indoors when you can and ensure you have the kit when it goes wrong because one day it will.

In Summary

A race track is a race track, irrespective of size, shape, cars used on it, look at what we do as though you we're a Health and Safety inspector, think about the potential trouble spots, remove as many as you can until you're happy that what you have done is sufficient, then gear up so when you're proved wrong you can deal with the outcome.

Track Construction & Race Timing

Getting the required bits and pieces together, for anybody new to the sport can seem to be an endless sequence of phone calls trying to establish just what everyone else does, hopefully the list below will go some way towards correcting that, it is of course biased towards indoor racing as that's where most of the problems occur.

Racing Carpet

There are Two suppliers, to my knowledge, of carpet suitable for racing RC cars on in the UK (more than happy to be corrected though!)

Eco Track and Access Ltd, Bridgemere Mills, Mowsley Lane, Nr Walton, Leicestershire, LE17 5RE – 01455 553700 sales@ecotrackandaccess.co.uk

Brand Name; PrimaTrack GT, comes in rolls 40m long by 2m wide and costs around £5 per square metre currently.

Marquee Carpets, Unit 8 Maxwells West, Great Cambridge Road, Cheshunt, EN8 8XH - 01992629624

Brand Name; Lindau, comes in rolls 45m long by 2m wide and costs around £3.50 per square metre currently.

We believe these products to be as near to identical as makes no difference

Both deliver and I believe the cost to be quite reasonable.

Track Markings

There are several different methods for marking out an indoor race track but before we go into the options one thing is important. Try to avoid any track marker that has the effect of launching a car into the air, especially on a high speed corner near the tracks outer edges as it will just mean that you need a stronger, higher track boundary.

The choices of marker can be dictated to you by the available storage space you have, I have seen everything from 1 inch hose pipe to tracks made entirely from 75mm square timber, and anything you can imagine in between, however I will concentrate on the two most popular choices.

Fire Hose

This would appear to be a really simple solution but seems to cause endless discussion, so I will deal with in the form of questions (I have actually been asked)

Where do we get it ? You go along to the local fire station and ask if they have any old stuff going spare, tell them what it's for, as they won't sell it to be used for its original purpose, normally it's a nominal donation to their current favourite charity in my experience.

What do we fill it with ? I have seen all sorts but mainly Sand and Gravel, neither I can recommend as sand is really messy when one splits, and gravel is really heavy. The best is floor sweepings from a factory that uses plastic granuals, check out plastic moulders, bag manufacturers etc in the yellow pages and have a ring around

How best to seal them ? Two choices here either just fold the ends over and bolt them shut (worth using a

bit of sealant) or the best method is to get some round fence posts the same diameter as the hose. Cut into 200mm lengths and fasten into one end of the hose protruding by 4 inches, at the other end of the hose, inset the wood by 4 inches, you can then "plug" them together.

Fire hose has lots of plus points when laying a track, not least of which is that sweeping corners are really easy, the downside is that it tends to drag the cars is, i.e if you clip it instead of bouncing off it will drag the car inwards so has the effect of being fairly marshal intensive. Also even when filled with plastic beads, still a bit on the hefty side and if you store in plain view, there is nothing you can do to stop it looking like a pile of old fire hose!

Plastic Tubing

This is my personal favourite, though I have seen a few variations the essential method revolves around 65mm square section downspout tubes, so to go through the same sort of questions again.

Where to get it? First of all find out if anybody in the club works for a builders merchant! You can of course buy this from any DIY store, but it's much cheaper in bulk from a builders merchant and you can specify exactly what you want, normally this would be 65mm Square Tubing in 4 metre lengths and frost protected type. (The frost protection sort has more "give" and helps to stop it breaking.

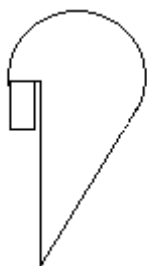
How do we fasten it down and together? Easy stuff to fasten down, simply put sticky backed velcro hook on it and stick it to the carpet! To fasten lengths together use the wooden block method as described for fire hose, you can also make T pieces for joining three pieces together, and have seen lots of weird and wonderful joints made at various clubs to get round specific problems. This is the track marker generally used at indoor nationals where to further hold everything in place each joint has a 25mm screw put in it.

Sweeping Corners? How do you do a sweeping bend with this stuff then ? well the answer is that you don't, you either do a "50p piece" style, or it involves really big pieces of wood (been there done that) however it doesn't really seem to matter the "50p" style works fine, and the racing certainly isn't effected.

Hairpin Bends etc.

For both fire hose and plastic tubing you will need some corners, sweeping bends are easy with hose, slightly tricky with tubing but achievable, neither do nice hairpins or 90 degree turns, so what do we do?

Well the answer often used is to manufacture solid corners from timber, normally two sheets of 18mm chipboard with some 25mm lats as a sandwich, which "plug in" to the hose or tubing, these look like this :-



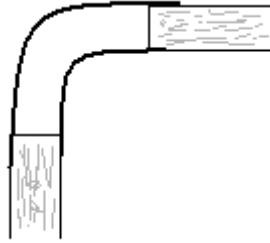
The Tubing or Hose plugs in to the lug on the left and then you get a right handed hairpin, for left handed you just turn it over. It would be normal to edge it with 10 – 15 mm high density foam strip and possibly a sheet of 3mm ABS plastic, velcro on the bottom stops it moving.

The same construction method can be used for a huge variety of corners, all sorts of shapes and sizes, an average club track needs about half a dozen hairpins and about the same number of 90's will do the job, if you ever do an indoor World Championships you could well fill a transit van!

It's also possible to use a "flapper" design for a hairpin or a 90 degree bend, these are more car friendly in that they can't really damage a car, but some drivers find them off putting when the car in front hits them. They are made by getting a wooden block suitable for your track marker, and fastening to it a length of 3mm ABS sheet (cut a sheet of this stuff into 75mm strips, you'll have enough to last you years) so it looks like the drawing below. The cars will just push the flapper out of the way, this knocks the car off line a bit but otherwise won't effect it, you can also make a 90 degree bend quite easily by using two blocks and two lenth of plastic, one shorter than the other, this will form a 90 bend (or whatever other angle you want) with a little practice.



Hairpin



90 degree corner.

Outdoor On Road Tracks

These will in the future be the topic of an entire guideline of their own, but for now the basics are this:-

A model car track needs to be constructed based on the theory that somebody will one day drive a van on it when you're not looking, don't laugh this has happened more than once.

A well laid out track with a nice bump free surface can have rubbish facilities any everyone will still love the place, the opposite of good facilities and bumpy track doesn't go down so well.

So how do we go about getting it right ? well it's the same as building anything else, it'll only be as good as the foundations its built upon, use the foundations suitable for a garden path it'll be useless in months, go for something suitable to put a motorway on, you've got a chance of it lasting a while.

Oddly enough for someone brought up on a diet of indoor racing I've now done a few outdoor tracks for people and this is one example of whats been done; - from the bottom up;-

30-40 mm sized aggregate, up to 200mm deep

10-15 mm sized aggregate, also up to 200mm deep

150 mm fibre reinforced concrete.

15 mm of 3-6 mm SMA (Limestone) surface

Of course that was correct for that venue, whats right for yours depends upon far too many factors to go through here, so the summation is, use a professional because you'll probably only get 1 shot at getting it done, it can be an expensive lesson to learn.

I and the other officials are only to happy to take time looking at plans, because that means you haven't built it yet and gives people time to make suggestions. There is a huge amount of experience within the sections, we have all either made the mistakes already or watched somebody else do it, take advantage of that collective knowledge. If you're going to invest a considerable amount of money pass your plans to as many people with that experience as possible. Not only will the pitfalls be pointed out, but you may find that you can expand the range of cars your facility can cope with much more easily than you first thought.

Outdoor track markings – On Road

What markings? I hear you ask, well mainly of course this is the grass, and the kerbs on corners, again as per indoor tracks kerbs should be designed not to launch a car into the air, especially on high speed corners. It's also well worth taking the time to edge a track properly, not only will this stop "creep" from the grass into the track surface it will also stop the track breaking up.

Consider going to the trouble to line the edge of the track with paint, not only does it look really good, most of the drivers then drive to the line which has a noticeable effect on the accident rate as you have the width of the line as a margin for error.

Try to give as much run off on the outside of the track before cars come into contact with the "good strong fence" (see Guideline 19) as possible, nothing stops a model car as effectively as grass left a few inches long.

Also where two sections of track pass each other, e.g infield loops and the main straight leave the gap reasonably wide, as you really don't want a car understeering off an infield corner onto the main straight do you?

If using a contractor ensure you fine detail kerbs and edging it's really difficult to change once in place.

In short take your time to do the detail, it makes a huge difference not only in appearance but also in how the circuit drives, get all this right and you'll have a venue that will stand the test of time.

& if in doubt **ASK!**

Off Road

Off road tracks in the UK come in all shapes and sizes, catering for the various sizes of RC vehicles run in the UK, unlike indoor racing when you can run 365 days a year careful consideration must go into the planning stage of your track and venue.

The first bit of advice is to get in touch with the local council to see if they have any preferred locations for you to be sited, with most off road tracks being outdoor venues, the UK weather also needs to be considered.

Over recent years there has been a steady increase in the UK of off road tracks being built indoors to cater for the smaller scales of vehicles, no matter if you are building your track indoor or outside the council must be your first port of call, speak with their head of planning and environment officer to see what they may need to ease any planning application you may wish to make - it's easier if they are on your side long term.

With regards to off road track builds, no one style suites all scales, it's best to make a visit several similar venue and talk to them as they can comment on what works and what doesn't, i.e. the "hose" piping on a 1/10th track and fixings will not be suitable for the large 1/5th off road buggies, the same goes with safety fencing, run off areas and track sizes.

Ask the clubs you visit what they did wrong, learning from others mistakes saves you time and money.

Even if you don't intend to race nationals at your venue, read the various off road section track guidelines and see if you can build yours similar with a suitable surface, the right track width etc.

Make sure your marshal points are safe and suitable, especially if anywhere near a jump – ensure stray cars cannot make contact with a marshal at their post.

With off road tracks appearing anywhere from farm barns to council parks up and down the country it is advisable to get it right first time because along with getting the track right you need to get the facility right too. Being outdoors you are going to need to build your own rostrum which will be safe and secure in all weathers, you will need a race control, some form of toilets and a source of power for charging everything.

For example:-

It may sound strange but think which direction the sun rises and sets as you don't want your drivers on the rostrum being blinded by the midday sun!

You'll need to take into account the water courses – make sure water runs away from the track – but not into the pits..

Planning it all:-

Make sure the track design is suitable for what you're planning to race now and has some flexibility in it to cater for what fashion might dictate you're racing next year

Try samples of track markers, surface, fencing etc with a few cars to see what works.

Get all that done and then your plan should be drawn up by a professional to suit the requirements of the local authority.

Having now done a site plan suitable for them you'll have an exact facility designed – but that's not the end of the planning process.

You need to plan the build - who will do what and when.

It will enable you to know where you are up to on a time and financial basis.

Finally have fun not just afterwards but during the build, as spending weekend after weekend building may force you to think about cutting corners but don't, stick to your plan, it will be worth it in the end.

Automatic Lap Counting Hardware and Software

Basic Principles

The basic timing equipment required starts from a basic laptop, timing software and printer. Most timing packages will support manual lap counting (if you can find someone willing to press buttons!) the drivers however are beginning to expect more.

Automatic lap counting revolves around the timing decoder, primarily the decoders are supplied by MyLaps (formerly AMB), and the drivers transponder. The decoder is connected to the timing PC (running the appropriate software) and an antenna, commonly known as the loop. As a car and transponder pass over the loop a signal is received by the decoder and the transponder number & time stamp is sent to the PC for the race timing software to record.

Timing Computer

As stated above, an average laptop is normally powerful enough to run the timing packages available, as a rule of thumb some the functions of the operating system (Windows) and office applications will demand much more processing power than a timing system requires.

Most of the timing software manufacturers will offer a trial licence for their applications to allow a club to try the software before committing to it, the trial software may be feature limited but it will give the Race Control officials the opportunity to get a feel for the software.

Decoder Hardware

The MyLaps decoder is the key hardware in the timing system, in essence the decoder contains three sets of electronics, a highly accurate clock, a transponder receiver/decoder and a communications module.

As a transponder passes over the decoders antenna the receiver/decoder module obtains the transponder signal and passes it to the communications module which obtains a timestamp from the clock module and sends the completed data stream to the timing computer.

Transponders

The modern transponder carries and transmits a unique number, that is transmitted to the decoder and subsequently the timing computer. Most transponders are now owned by the drivers and therefore are permanently fixed into the car, there are however some new starters who may not have their own transponders, for this for this reason handout rechargeable transponders can be purchased by the club to distribute, they are becoming less common.

Appendix

Warning Signs

This could be fastened to the fence surrounding the track.



As an alternative the text from the above can be used, just reproduce in A4 size

**WARNING: THE PITS AND PIT LANE ARE AREAS OF
POTENTIAL DANGER AND GREAT CARE SHOULD BE
EXERCISED AT ALL TIMES**

You can add if required

**CHILDREN UNDER THE AGE OF x ARE
NOT ALLOWED IN THESE AREAS**
(insert an age limit relevant to your class)

Notes

Notes