

## **Race Meetings Restricted by Covid-19**

The seismic changes in life over the last few months due to COVID-19 have led to great advances in how Motorsport is delivered with the inevitable adoption of more IT.

Is this for the good?

How much will we use when we return to normality?

What else can be added?

Signing on for drivers, officials & marshals no longer exists with the introduction of the self-declaration, this brings with it the advantages of no long queues, although marshals still need to know their location for the day, there is no waiting for the Secretary of the Meeting to let you in or for the Chief Marshal to turn up. Surely this will remain although socialisation suffers.

The adoption of the digital official noticeboard has become an essential tool for the Secretary of the Meeting to inform everyone with bulletins and information leading to us becoming virtually paper free, there is no printing of times and results etc. with teams, drivers and officials all able to access the latest information electronically. The majority of this information has previously been available on the timekeeper's website but how it is distributed has changed. I doubt if we will return to using copious reams of paper, certain areas still need to be improved such as race logs and grids for the start line and assembly marshals but the technology is there to overcome these and given time I feel sure it will be adopted.

From a Clerk's perspective and also for the Stewards' Judicial Hearings I believe still need to be done face to face albeit with the correct social distancing and PPE but Zoom, Microsoft Teams will surely be adapted for use in the future. Decisions can now be given digitally and emailed to competitors and added to the virtual noticeboard, with protests and appeals submitted likewise, leading to more transparency in the judicial process, surely another side benefit. The Secretary of the Meeting still collates everything but instead of handing over reams of paper it is

collated digitally for transmission to the Motorsport UK Steward, the next stage will be direct transmission to Motorsport UK leaving the Steward just to report on the meeting.

The race programme can also now be produced digitally and put on websites and noticeboards but this will be detrimental when programmes can be sold again although the financial gain is not significant for club meetings it will be for the headline meetings.

All areas have had to learn to develop new skills and work in different ways, some more than others. Race Control and Secretary of the Meeting's room have become much quieter as they are now less populated due to the need for social distancing but all for the better, less noise in race control with only essential Clerks in the room and track limits relegated to the nearest broom cupboard and a quiet work environment for the Secretary of the Meeting.

There is no denying IT is here to stay and everyone has their favourite programme for distribution of information such as e-mail, WhatsApp, Viber, Microsoft Teams and those they favour for collation and storage such as Zip File, We Transfer and Dropbox etc. Is it not possible for Motorsport UK to come up with a universal method that all clubs can use? Maybe they can but would clubs use it? I doubt it, they like their independent individuality too much.

In answer to the first two of the three questions posed at the beginning of this article there is little argument that the increased use of IT is more environmentally friendly than handling large quantities of paper and in the current climate the reduction in paths of transmission of COVID-19 is essential, the speed of and availability of the latest information is also a huge advance on what we had previously so this is definitely for the good and the processes are likely to remain, be honed and simplified until they become second nature.

The final question, what can be added? That is something that everyone can contribute to, suggestions are very welcome.

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