

The Trials Reform Group

Scottish Trials – The Future Options

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1. Preamble:

An open document, created to compare, contrast, discuss, analyse in an objective manner and make suitable recommendations as appropriate.

Using current information, the aim is to establish, whether or not the Scottish Auto Cycle Union (SACU), being the dominant governing body for trials in Scotland at this time, is still an effective organisation to foster and promote the sport of Motorcycle Trials in Scotland and to make appropriate recommendations and options.

2. Audience:

- Scottish Trials riders and clubs who organise motorcycle trial competitive events.
- Any other stakeholders such as competitors, club officials and directors of affiliated clubs (who are limited liability companies or other incorporated organisations) who may have an interest sporting, financial or otherwise in Motorcycle Trials Sport in Scotland.

3. Preparation Sponsors:

This paper has been prepared by The Trials Reform Group (TTRG). It consists of like-minded enthusiasts, who have foremost the sport at heart and have no financial; commercial or vested interest in the sport of trials.

TTRG are aware that the life-blood of the sport are it's competitors, clubs and the enthusiasts that work within motorcycle clubs and the landowners that grant access to allow us to enjoy our sport of trials in Scotland. The group appreciate the work that goes on behind the scenes to make our sport happen.

TTRG members will not gain personally from any of the recommendations made in this document, should said recommendations be subsequently implemented by any trials clubs.

Terms of reference are included towards the end of this document.

4. Limitations:

This document is intended to be confined to the sport of Trials in Scotland only and is not intended to incorporate details of any of the other sporting disciplines of the governing bodies, namely Road Racing; Enduro; Motocross; Quad Racing or any other form of competitive motorcycling.

5. Introduction:

As described in the preamble, this open document is to discuss both the advantages and the disadvantages of the SACU, its' position within the Scottish trials scene and the also discuss the pros and cons of any clubs who may be contemplating a move to any other suitable alternative governing body which could provide a similar or better service to its member clubs and their membership.

6. The Organisations Described:

Scottish Auto Cycle Union - (SACU):

(Reference – SACU website and their published literature)

The SACU was founded in 1913 as a union of motorcycle clubs in Scotland. The SACU is regarded by the writers as the 'status quo'.

Its' original aims were to promote and develop the sport of motorcycling in Scotland. In recent years it has perhaps fallen short of delivering its' prime objectives.

A company limited by guarantee, with directors for the last 20 years and therefore required to produce annual financial accounts; it has sustained significant losses on its' ordinary activities over a three year period to 31st December 2012.

The organisation, according to its October 2013 management committee minutes, already anticipates a loss for the 2013 financial year.

As a direct consequence it has been unable to support the sport of motorcycling financially as effectively in comparison to previous periods, when it benefited from healthy surpluses. This is due in part to reduced numbers of competition in some, but not all areas of its operation; reduction in the surplus from insurance sales and inflationary increases in wages and salaries and other overheads over the periods in question.

Prior to 1988, the SACU operated substantially on a 'voluntary' basis with no salaried staff, only an Honorary Secretary with a modest honorarium and expenses.

Since 1988, it has operated from office accommodation with salaried administrative employees, currently 4 in number. The SACU directors are formed from the Chairpersons of each discipline committee plus elected office bearers (Chairman; Vice-Chairmen; President, Vice- President, etc.) and a Treasurer that is a non-elected position being appointed by the board.

In 2006 the SACU became engaged with leisure related (non-competitive) motorcycling activity; illegal riding activity issues and the perceived need to build a 'centre of excellence' style complex. These projects were pursued with eventual funding of around £40,000 per annum granted by Sport-Scotland specifically to fund the engagement of a Business Development Manager. However the SACU failed to attract suitable applicants and the project was abandoned in 2010. Unfortunately, this diversity into 'leisure' based activity was seen to be in direct variance to the 'competition' element of the SACU which, in reality, formed the majority stake-holding in the SACU. The SACU leisure enterprise was effectively abandoned in 2010 following the resignation of the SACU Director of Leisure.

Some background information - Motocross: In 2011, specific member clubs involved in the promotion of primarily the sport of Motocross Racing; became increasingly frustrated with the SACU, citing several aspects as the catalysts for change. The organising clubs de-affiliated to an alternative governing body, the Motocross Federation (MCF) which set up its equivalent 'Scottish Motocross Federation' (SMXF) in December 2011. The majority of the motocross clubs left the SACU in December 2011.

The initial effect being that motocross racing was split between two governing bodies, with no common licensing system and for the 2012/13 racing season this brought problems of reduced starting gates, duplication of dates and both frustration and increased cost for competitors as the two organisations competed to promote events. This was not an ideal situation and one to avoid occurring in the future.

The SACU charge an ACU Benevolent Fund levy per rider which is then remitted to the ACU Benevolent Fund.

Compatibility: SACU licences are compatible with those of the ACU but not the AMCA.

Auto Cycle Union - (ACU):

(Reference – ACU website and their published literature)

Formed in 1909, the ACU is a limited liability company with directors, based in Rugby with full and part time staff, operating from office accommodation with a variety of departments covering all branches of motorcycle sport.

It is recognised as the sports' governing body in the United Kingdom by the Geneva based **Federation Internationale de Motocyclisme (FIM)**.

Over the years, the SACU have been regarded as a national club of the ACU and effectively similar to an ACU centre, given certain autonomy.

The SACU in the past issued International licences, although this ceased some years ago and International competition licences and insurance is now only available through the ACU facility.

The ACU handbook and National Sporting Code is regarded as the benchmark and encompasses not only trials but all forms of motorcycle sports. The SACU make use of the ACU Handbook, National Sporting Code and specifications, with only minimal deviation to cater for local/regional anomalies being fundamentally but not exclusively the Scottish Championships series. The rules and regulations of the SACU tend to mirror the ACU.

The ACU have already negotiated special deals with an external insurance broker to allow trials machines to be covered whilst competing in 'on-road events' such as the Scottish Six Days.

The ACU has several associated companies for promotional activities e.g. ACU Events Ltd.

The ACU has a Benevolent Fund levy which is also utilised by the SACU at this point in time.

Compatibility: ACU licences are compatible with those of the SACU but not the AMCA.

Amateur Motor Cycle Association - (AMCA):

(Reference – AMCA website and their published literature)

The AMCA was founded in 1932, in the West Midlands of England with over 200 affiliated clubs, which lists its disciplines as Trials; Motocross specific of which accounts for 50% of their number; Scrambles and Enduro.

Its website lists the organisations activities as being in 'England and Wales', it does not list Scotland although it does have 3 Scottish based clubs.

It is listed as an independent non-profit making organisation with directors for off-road motorcycle sport. It does not cover road racing. It also has a benevolent fund similar to the ACU.

Compatibility: AMCA licences are not compatible with ACU or SACU.

7. The Current Trials Scene in Scotland:

Under the SACU, there are approximately 350 adult competition licence holders and a further 50 youth competition licence holders. The cost of a licence is currently £50.00 per rider for the year.

The question has been raised around the paddocks at Scottish trials for several years, as to why the SACU trials Licences are considerably more expensive than the ACU equivalent?

The SACU also issues 'one-event' licences to those who do not ride regularly and who do not purchase a full licence. The cost of the 'one-event' licence is £11.00 per each licence issued.

There are 14 affiliated clubs who organise just over 100 trials events per year, a mixture of national and closed to club events, with a relatively small number of International and European events annually.

The AMCA have 3 affiliated clubs in Scotland, based in the Central Belt area with around 100 members each, running approximately 20 events per annum. The AMCA do not insist that competitor's hold a licence, but those that do not hold a licence are required to pay a higher entry fee. The Scottish AMCA clubs operate under the Yorkshire area AMCA as there is no separate Scottish area.

All Scottish affiliated clubs are responsible for financing; promoting; sourcing venue and land use and organising the events with no assistance from the governing body. There is an annual Scottish Championship (SACU) recognised by the ACU as a regional championship similar in stature to their own Centre Championships.

The SACU provide an event Steward (for Nationals), permit and also event and rider insurance cover (including landowners' liability cover) and charge an ACU Benevolent Fund levy from a set table of fees. (See Cost/Benefit Analysis).

8. Cost/Benefit Analysis*:

Finance:

Current cost from each association is as follows (assuming 45 Adults and 5 Youths per event)

SACU (Status Quo)

		Fee/unit	Total
Club association fees £20 per 25 members	average fee	£80.00	£1,120.00
Permit		£55.00	£5,885.00
Licences		£50	£20,000.00
Insurance Average entry 50 (x 107 trials)		£2.50	£13,375.00
		£1.25	£668.75
Rider benevolent fund		£0.15	£802.50
		Total	£41,851.25

** Proposed expenses 32 trials per year at £50 is an additional £1600, new total: **£43,451.25**

AMCA (assuming SACU affiliated clubs moved over)

		Fee/unit	Total
Club association fees		£50.00	£700.00
Permit		£17.50	£1,824.35
Licences		£15	£6,000.00
Insurance Average entry 50	Adult	£2.50	£13,375.00
	Youth	£1.25	£668.75
		Total	£22,568.10

ACU (assuming SACU affiliated clubs moved over)

		Fee/unit	Total
Club association fees	average fee (50 to 100 members)	£20.00	£280.00
Permit	Centre National 32	£50/day	£1,600.00
	Closed to club Issued by Centre 75	£35	£2,625.00
Licences		£10	£4,000.00
Insurance	Adult	£2.70	£14,445.00
	Youth	£1.35	£722.26
Levy and Insurance waiver		£2.00	£10,700.00
		Total	£34,372.26

In considering the notional total cost should the trial community decide to change association would be fees SACU charge £19,283.50 (**Proposed £20,883.50) more than the AMCA and £7478.99 (**Proposed £10,789.99) more than the fees from the ACU.

** It was intimated in the September Management Committee minutes of the SACU, that SACU Steward's expenses be paid for by the promoting club, in addition to the current Permit Fee charged. If this was to take place, it would increase the cost to the clubs. TTRG have made the assumption for these calculations that this would amount to £50 per event. Please note at the time of preparing this cost benefit analysis this proposal has not been passed by the SACU.

9. Support and Training:

The SACU provide stewards (for national meetings) and rules, which are in effect only slightly, modified established ACU Rules and National Sporting Code.

They also provide training seminars for Clerk of the Course, Secretary, Stewards and Environmental officers, free of charge. However, despite several requests for certification of training personnel at club level over the past 18 months with clubs offering to pay, no response has been forthcoming. No finance appears to have been filtering down to develop riders or rider training for several years. The last significant trainee was Gary Macdonald by the ACU, but that was approximately nine years ago, funded by the SACU Trials Fund.

The AMCA have an expectation that Clubs have experienced personnel and offer little in the way of training.

The ACU offer a large number of courses and certification, they are much better resourced to help clubs develop their members in a wide range of activities. ACU has recently certified qualified trainers for MotoScotland.com with no mention of any SACU activity whatsoever.

10. Promotion of Trials in Scotland:

SACU fixtures list of permitted dates appear on the website. At the time of writing no Trials Discipline Committee minutes were available on the website, although Management (Directors) minutes are available for most of 2013.

AMCA appear to offer little in event promotion. They do however display committee minutes on their website.

The ACU have an extensive calendar of events on their website and openly display all main and sub-committee minutes. They also produce a weekly newsletter sent by e-mail to all trials licence holders.

ACU have recently supported the opening and development of MotoScotland.com demonstrating they are already active in Scotland.

11. Conclusions:

The main aims were to investigate, collate information and report as impartially as possible and to make such information freely available to all motorcycle clubs and its' members who operate in Scotland or who are directly affiliated to the Scottish Auto Cycle Union; who primarily or otherwise have an interest in promotion and organising observed motorcycle trials (sport).

Clubs and riders should expect to receive value for money from which-ever governing body they affiliate to. Governing bodies should be in a financial position to operate an effective sporting promotion fund to enable the sport to be properly and effectively fostered.

Given the findings in the cost/benefit analysis, it is evident that the SACU are not offering value for money to both riders and clubs, when compared to the alternative bodies at this time.

The £10 annual 'Registration Card' offered by ACU is very competitively priced, coupled with the ACU £1.50 levy per event, has been in operation for many years without variance and is the opinion of the TTRG, a very hard licence style fee to beat. The TTRG regard this combination as the 'benchmark' to measure the alternative bodies against; being an extremely low, up-front and modest 'pay as you go' combination cost to be borne directly by competitors and excellent value for a competitors' money.

Individual clubs and their appointed committees and members should decide whether or not they have the 'appetite' for such change. They would most likely be required to call an Extra-ordinary General Meeting (EGM) of their members to discuss any moves away from their current governing body. This should only be done in a constitutional manner.

The TTRG give their full consent for this paper to be presented to their members if desired, to assist this purpose.

The papers or reports of the TTRG have been produced with no specific motorcycle club in mind, other than it must have an interest in the promotion of motorcycle trials (sport).

Clubs should only de-affiliate if better value for money is achieved or benefits and facilities improved, other-wise the Status Quo should be preserved until such time as it is achievable.

12. Options:

The TTRG conclude that there are three main options open to clubs, these are:

- Remain with their current governing body (i.e. Do nothing)
- Remain with their governing body and ask them to at minimum, match the terms offered by the ACU, being the most competitively priced (see 8. Cost/Benefit analysis).
- De-affiliate from existing governing body and affiliate to an alternative governing body as described and discussed above.

13. Key Points and Benefits:

There is the potential opportunity to have one Governing body, bound by one set of rules for the whole of the UK. – [Uniformity for trials, covering all levels.](#)

Having examined the facts, the TTRG believe this would be more likely achieved through the ACU, given its economies of scale, wide resources, staffing levels and standing.

13.1. Access all areas and established website – [Ease of obtaining all relevant information on trials.](#)

13.2. ACU Championships

- British Championship
- ACU Centre Championships – ([potential 'Scottish Centre' Trials Championships to continue the current 'Scottish' Trials Championships.](#))

- 13.3. On-Line Registration for licences. – [Saving time and money](#).
- 13.4. Download riders licence forms fee – cost: £10 per annum – [Saves money](#).
- 13.5. Credit Card Payment – [Convenience, ease of use](#).
- 13.6. Training courses advertised and extensive for all activities including trainers, officials and riders – [Better trained sports officials](#).
- 13.7. Club Directory on line – [Spread of information](#).
- 13.8. Members Benefits: Discounts on Bike insurance including road bikes – [Saving money](#).
- 13.9. Insurance Cover:
- Premier Cover: £30 million.
 - Basic Cover: £10 million.
 - Public Liability: £30 million.
 - FIM Release and Start Permissions – Only available from ACU.
 - Insurance includes cover in case of prosecution by officials of Health and Safety Executive. – [Peace of mind and protection](#).
- 13.10. World recognised organisation, FIM – [Peace of mind & beneficial for International riders and riders who want to compete abroad on occasions](#).
- 13.11. Publish the Handbook i.e. ACU rulebook downloadable – [Access to information & Saves time](#).
- 13.12. Access to all Event Paperwork:
- Risk assessment documentation
 - Competitors Signing on forms
 - Officials Signing on forms
 - Convenience for Club officials – [Saves time and effort](#).
- 13.13. Club membership fees:
- First year £50 fee
- Thereafter:
- Up to 50 members - £10
 - 51 to 99 members - £20
 - 100 to 199 members - £40
 - 200 plus members - £50
- [Saves money](#).
- (SACU is now £20 per each band of 25 members)
- 13.14. Reduced overall cost to Scottish trial riders – [Saves riders money](#).
- Individual adult riders costs (round numbers)

	ACU	SACU
Licence	£10	£50
Insurance	£2.50	£2.50
Riders benevolent and levy	£2.00	£0.50
Total cost 10 event per year	£55	£80
Total cost 20 event per year	£100	£110
Total cost 25 event per year	£112.50	£125

In short, the average rider rides less than 25 events per year and therefore the ACU is less expensive for competitors – [good for riders, good for clubs](#).

Please be aware that many competitors, over the last few years, especially those who are self-employed, appear to be arranging their own ‘stand alone’ personal accident cover. This has not been taken into account in any calculations.

13.15. Permit Fees:

Nationals £100 (this would be similar to ACU trials events like the SCOTT etc)

Scottish Open to Centre; Nationals (such as the current Ian Pollock) and Closed to Club events would be set by a Scottish Centre Trials committee and would be typically between £35 and £50.

- [Saves clubs money and allows them to build up their own funds](#).

13.16. Trials Committee:

An opportunity perhaps, to develop a new set-up potentially new methods of creating the trials committee, perhaps each club votes at club level to send forward a representation to the new committee so we do not have the situation we have now where a club can have 40% of the committee members, thus removing bias to one club. No requirement for a Committee Chairman to be a Director.

14. Terms of Reference:

The Trials Reform Group (referred to as TTRG hereafter) is an ad-hoc body of like-minded individuals, formed in mid-2013, comprising of sports people who have an interest in observed motorcycle trials (sport). The TTRG does not collect subscriptions, fees or income of any kind and all expenditure is all individuals out-of-pocket for the betterment of the sport of motorcycle trials only.

The initial anonymity of the group's members has been felt necessary, to avoid those expressing interest in this paper, to be concerned with the personalities involved in the group, but to therefore concentrate on the issues and matters in hand surrounding the sport of trials in Scotland.

The overall quest of the TTRG is for the good of the sport of trials in Scotland. The groups' members believe that most competitors are not pre-occupied with what a governing body is or stands for; they simply want to compete on their motorcycles as often and as economically as possible.

As a result of discussions within the Scottish trials community and given the apparent 'undercurrent of disquiet' amongst some clubs and individuals who organise motorcycle trials events, it was thought worthy to attempt to produce useable, unbiased information, sourced from the governing bodies themselves, to give those interested parties an opportunity to fully understand, discuss and take appropriate action or otherwise, but in a responsible and informed manner.

- To provide unbiased useful and understandable information to clubs and their members concerning the options of alternative sport governing bodies to cover Scottish trials.
- To facilitate an open forum, to allow honest discussion, if appropriate.
- To make visitations to interested clubs, if appropriate and under invitation from such club committees.
- To remain an 'ad hoc' group only with no formal committee as is usual with such enterprise.
- To be non-profit making in nature.
- To be an information service only.
- To provide such information, free of charge, the modest cost covered by members of the 'ad hoc' group, which should be kept to a minimum, given there are no sponsors and no resource requirement other than by private means.
- To remain impartial, objective and reasonable at all times.
- To remain independent of any particular governing body, whilst the group is in existence and until the group is disbanded by mutual agreement of its members.
- The members of the TTRG have no desire to form an alternative sporting governing body or the group itself to become part of one or to operate a website for the distribution of such information.
- The group has not been formed to disrupt the sport of motorcycle trials in any way, nor to attempt to alter any rules, regulations or national sporting codes of any particular organisation, incorporated or otherwise.
- The TTRG members do not hold allegiance to any particular motorcycle club.
- The TTRG members appreciate that they do not hold any lobbying rights or voting rights, these are held by affiliated clubs and their elected officials and committees.

- No information of a 'confidential nature', belonging to any governing body will be distributed by the TTRG in any form whatsoever.
- Any actions so taken are the responsibility of the clubs themselves, not the members of the TTRG.
- The members of the TTRG have set out to ingather as much useful information that is in the 'public domain' from the SACU; ACU and AMCA as well as other similar organisations that might benefit the users of their reports.

15. Caveats:

Please note that any actions taken by individuals or their respective clubs are done so entirely at their own volition and risk.

The members of the TTRG do not have any financial interest in the sport or the SACU or any other governing body whatsoever.

Any club wishing to disaffiliate from any organisation or governing body, should first carefully examine that facts and how any actions would affect their own organisation be it legal or financial. Clubs should contact their own governing body to establish whether there are any release fees or obligations, before taking any action. They are recommended to carefully examine their own Constitutions, Memorandum & Articles of Associations and Rules and be conversant with them, before attempting to take any actions.

The TTRG cannot be held responsible if a club takes any actions of de-affiliation from their current governing body for any outcomes or actions taken against any club by its current governing body.

The TTRG cannot be held responsible for any changes by the respective governing bodies at any time and for the accuracy of any information that is either freely available in the public domain or otherwise, or is held privately by any individual organisation.

The information distributed by TTRG to interested clubs is all freely available from the sports' governing bodies either by request or by interfacing with their respective websites. The accuracy of such information is the responsibility of the individual governing body, not the TTRG.

***E & OE – Errors and Omissions Expected. Whilst ever care has been taken to prepare this document, users are advised to use their own bespoke examples utilising information from the respective governing bodies mentioned in this document.**

16. Correspondence & Contact:

The TTRG gives interested clubs and stake-holders the permission to distribute this document to their members by electronic means or in hard copy format, provided that the content is not altered in any way.

A Questions and Answers document is also available from TTRG.

Correspondence and requests may be conveyed via the following e-mail facility.

thetrialsreformgroup@outlook.com

17. Reference Material:

www.acu.org.uk

www.amca.uk.com

www.sacu.co.uk

www.mcfederation.com

www.facebook.com/scottishmotocrossfederation

This paper is issued by The Trials Reform Group - 13 November 2013 (Subject to alteration and amendment without notice)

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