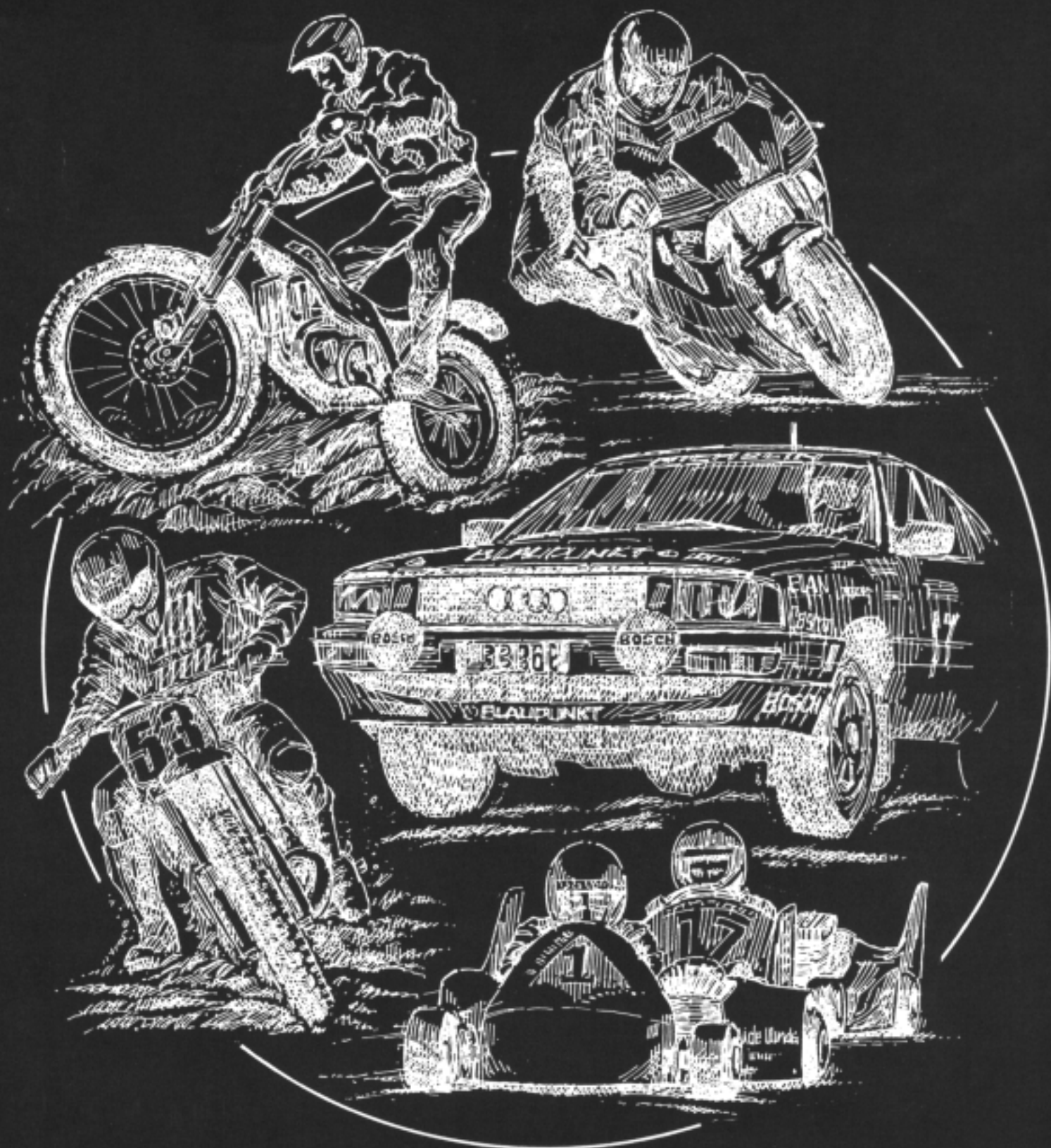


NORTHERN MOTORSPORTS PROJECT



'THE WAY AHEAD' 1991

CONTENTS

	<i>Page</i>
1. Preface: The Project Partners	4
2. The Way Ahead: Introduction	7
3. The Northern Motorsports Project	7
4. The Local Authorities	8
5. The Governing Bodies	10
6. Land Access	12
7. Community Motorsport: Responses to Auto Crime	15
8. The Private Sector	20
9. Warden Law: Synopsis of the Project	21
Appendices:	
A: The Way Ahead: Organisations Consulted	
B: Qualified Instructors in the Region	

NORTHERN REGION: LOCAL AUTHORITY AREAS



THE NORTHERN MOTORSPORT PROJECT 'THE WAY AHEAD' 1991

A report setting out "The Way Ahead" for motorsports facility, provision, participation and the development of performance in the Northern Region.

Originated and compiled by Andrew Thomas, Motorsports Development Officer.

Acknowledgement

I would like to thank the hard pressed volunteers who have given their time to discuss these issues and provide information; their help has been invaluable. Additionally, full-time site operators and other professionals in motorsports have been generous with their time and advice.

1: Preface: The Project Partners

1.1 *The Sports Council, Northern Region*

The establishment of the Northern Motorsports Project in the autumn of 1988 provided the opportunity to focus attention on the issues facing community motorsport. The Sports Council's objectives in supporting the project are:

- i. to explore the potential for grass roots motorsport,
- ii. to focus attention on the issues facing community motorsport, with a view to establishing policies for the way forward,
- iii. to address the problems presented by unaffiliated riders/drivers (the so called 'cowboys').

At the time of establishing the Project the concern of the Sports Council at the lack of a co-ordinated approach to the development of motorsport and the problems of access and image which it faced had already led to the establishment of a Federation of user groups (Northern Motorsports Federation) and a Forum (Local Authority Forum) within which Planning Officers and Recreation Officers of local authorities could discuss the issues and consider ways in which provision might be made. The impetus generated by these initiatives then combined with the groundswell of interest resulting from the publication of research commissioned by the Sports Council ("Providing for Motorsports From Image to Reality" Elson and others 1986). This, together with the opportunities to undertake sports development focussed on Tyne and Wear as part of funding made available to compensate for the abolition of the Metropolitan County Council, led to the establishment of the Project.

It is difficult to arrive at objective conclusions about the success of the Project so far — there can be no doubt that much has changed since 1988. Many lessons have been learned which will undoubtedly contribute to the achievement of our objectives to increase "responsible" participation, improve performance and the provision of facilities. One of the successes has been the co-operation which has been achieved between the partners involved in the Project and the undoubted commitment of the Project Officer himself Andrew Thomas.

I leave readers of this report to judge for themselves whether the Project identifies The Way Ahead for Motorsports in the Northern Region.

Geoffrey Hughes
Regional Officer

1.2 *Norcare*

The 1988 Home Office Working Group on Car Crime identified the scale and impact of car crime within the community. Since then car crime, or auto offending as it has come to be known, has risen. The increase has been in the number of offences, impact upon the community and effect in terms of people killed or injured as a result of what are mainly young inexperienced individuals stealing motor vehicles.

Norcare became a partner in the Northern Motorsports Project for two reasons. Firstly, the Home Office Working Group recommended that courts should be offered packages of work which would actively engage young people in changing their auto offending behaviour. Secondly, the Working Group identified the need for motor projects to act as a diversion from auto offending. A significant part of the Project's work has been to stimulate and foster co-operation between groups and agencies involved in motorsports, community provision and work with auto offenders.

Community motor sports projects and the diversionary work which take place within such facilities are a significant component in the response to auto crime. They also have the added benefit of bringing those who may otherwise not participate, in contact with a variety of motor sports. Community motor sports projects and auto offending programmes which operate within them are generally under-funded. Changing an individual's or group's anti-social behaviour is neither simple nor cheap. If we wish to respond positively to the problem of auto crime we must ensure that the funding of programmes of work which have proved themselves to be effective is secured and sustained. Areas where a positive response has been made are identified in this report and as such they represent signposts for the future direction of a community based response to auto crime.

Tony Regan
Chief Executive
Norcare

1.3 The Northern Motorsports Federation

The Northern Motorsports Federation was formed in December 1987 following an initiative by the Sports Council (Northern Region) to bring together in a forum for discussion the various motorsport organisations in the region. The Northern Motorsports Federation was the second to be formed in Britain and the first to welcome membership from all major organisations in land-based motorsport and recreation.

The operation of the Federation in its first two years was greatly facilitated by the presence of the Northern Motorsport Project and the regular input of the Project Officer, Andrew Thomas. The issues put before the Federation for discussion and resolution showed the motor clubs that they face new and, occasionally, alarming challenges as motorsport prepares to enter its second century.

The pattern of motorsport activity in the region reflects most of the problems that the sport sees nationally: a decline in the number of young people, changes to the nature of life in the countryside such as an increase in residential barn conversions, a severe increase in the fees charged for the use of forests and MoD land, tight planning and noise controls, a slow but relentless shift in policy tending to exclude "noisy sports" from National Parks and Sites of Special Scientific Interest. Motorsport must plan to meet those changes and this planning must occur at all levels — not just in some distant headquarters.

The various motorsport federations are an ideal forum for a two-way exchange of ideas, problems and information, both between clubs and their governing bodies and between clubs of different disciplines. The needs, problems and aspirations of, say, a big club organising major car rallies and a small motorcycle trail riding organisation are necessarily different, but they can both really benefit by this regular contact.

The Northern Motorsport Project has been of great assistance to the Federation in collecting, collating and exchanging much valuable information. It is hoped that motorsports' governing bodies have realised this and will take steps to maintain and properly service the Federation.

Some motor clubs seemed unable or unwilling to work closely with the Northern Motorsport Project. These were thus unable to profit in any direct way, although they did benefit from the Project's work for all motorsport organisations. Other motor clubs have said that they feel the Project "appeared without warning" and they express surprise that no regional ACU or RAC MSA official was on the management team. The clubs also state that they were unwilling to become involved in "Wheels Park" projects as they regard these as presenting a bad image for motorsport and not giving the clubs any real advantage in planned facilities.

One of the problems of motorsport is that it is different to most other sports in that part of its very nature is the variation in the use of venues. This means that these are only used a few times per year, unlike other sports venues. This does cause problems when seeking help from the Sports Council in that they are more used to dealing with sports which have permanent venues. More liaison with the Sports Council is vital so that they understand more about motorsport and our needs.

The formation of the Northern Motorsport Federation has been an important step in bringing the various forms of motorised sport together. However some disciplines attend very irregularly and we need to make sure that we are more than a 'talking shop'.

Motorsport in the region needs promotion and new secure venues if it is to progress or, in some areas, even survive. The Northern Motorsports Project was valuable in that we found out how we felt a motorsport development officer should work and I am sure that lessons have been learnt for any such future role in this or other regions.

A. D. Kind
Honorary Secretary
Northern Motorsport Federation

1.4 The Durham County Probation Service

Although the Probation Service are not partners I was invited to be a co-opted member of the Management Committee of the project because of my previous involvement in motoring projects for offenders. It was felt this input was to be very useful as the unlawful use of vehicles by young people was of growing concern.

Whilst auto theft has long been a problem, in the recent past it has taken on more significance. In 1990 6960 vehicles were taken in County Durham alone — a rise of 70% since 1988. The media are frequently reporting the stealing of vehicles and stealing from vehicles. A more recent phenomenon is the use of vehicles for ram raids in the course of burglary. Whilst this issue is unlikely to be present in a project of this nature, it raises the public awareness and concerns about auto offending generally.

Going back to the question of taking vehicles without consent and unlawful driving both on and off the road, there have been several attempts over the years to address this problem through motor projects. There appears to be a lack of any real substantial evidence as to the long term effectiveness of such projects. These schemes have come and gone in various parts of the country, often because they have been developed as a result of the needs of a particular project without adequate facilities.

What may be required is the development of sites that a number of Projects can link into. This could provide discreet facilities to help reduce offending, e.g. assist in general education as well as particularly addressing the question of auto offending. It would involve projects using these facilities on a regional basis, calling for inter-service co-operation along the lines recently proposed by the Home Office for the Probation Service. This would provide an opportunity for a scheme to be properly monitored and reviewed over a longer period of time (say three years) so that a decision can be made regarding the viability of such projects. It would be hoped that funding from a central source could be made available to evaluate this development in this area of growing concern.

M. A. Cope
Senior Probation Officer
Durham County Probation Service

2: The Way Ahead: Introduction

This report has been compiled after two and a half years of the Project. It follows the Northern Motorsports Project "1989 Issues Report" and the research which was connected with that document. The consultation exercise for "The Way Ahead" was broad ranging (see Appendix A).

It was originally intended that the document would represent the final statement about the Project, the problems and opportunities it presented and to set out the way forward for motorsports in the Northern Region. Whilst this is still the intention the Project will now continue to run, on a part-time basis, until the end of March 1992.

It was stated in the Northern Motorsports Project "1989 Issues Report" that the report is intended to be the first step in the compilation of a regional development plan for all motorsport. (1) It is expected that this report, "The Way Ahead", is part of that on-going process.

The Report has been compiled to document the information obtained both formally and informally at this stage of the Project. Many valuable lessons have been learned, and these are documented in the main text. The perspective of the partners is stated in their respective statements.

The Report should not be seen as a definitive statement of the position of motorsport in the Northern region. It is an attempt to document the major themes which have emerged over the time of the project to date from a variety of perspectives. It is hoped that the Report will provide a framework for reflection and activity to secure a positive and dynamic future for motorsport within the Northern region, and identify a clear way ahead for the statutory voluntary and commercial interests involved.



3: The Northern Motorsports Project

The Northern Motorsports Project is a formal partnership between three bodies. Norcare, the Sports Council Northern Region and the Northern Motorsports Federation. The first two partners are responsible for the funding of the project. During the financial years; 1988/89, 1989/90, the Sports Council provided 75% of the budget and Norcare 25%. During 1990/91 Norcare and the Sports Council shared equal responsibility for funding the project. The principal source of the Sports Council finance is money made available to compensate for the abolition of the Tyne and Wear Metropolitan County Council.

The Project is distinct from the Sports Council National Demonstration Project at Langbaugh Motorsports. The Community Liaison Officer of that Project has worked closely with the Motorsports Development Officer on several initiatives.

The staffing of the project until March 31st 1991 consisted of a full-time Motorsports Development Officer and a third share of a full-time secretary. Management control is exercised by a Management Committee comprising of a Regional Officer of the Sports Council, Norcare's Chief Executive, the Honorary Secretary of the Northern Motorsports Federation and a representative of the Durham County Probation Service, who was co-opted onto the Committee in 1989.

In March 1991 a six month extension of the Project was agreed between the partners. The Sports Council (Northern Region) will fund 75% of the costs and Norcare 25%. The post of Project Officer is now running on a part-time basis until the end of March 1992.

The project has operated in parallel with the Langbaugh Motorsports Project since October 1988. Langbaugh Motorsports is supported by the Sports Council who provided funding for a Community Liaison Officer and designated the scheme a National Demonstration Project. Whilst the Northern Motorsports Project covered the Cleveland area, for purposes of community development it was agreed that the Langbaugh Community Liaison Officer treat the county as "home ground". Communication between the two projects was ensured by the presence of the Motorsports Development Officer on the steering group of the National Demonstration Project, and by on-going informal co-operation between the two officers. The Community Liaison Officer left his post in December 1990 and it is expected that a replacement is to be appointed in 1991.

4: The Local Authorities

Introduction

From the research undertaken and an extensive consultation exercise with all Local Authorities in the region it appears that the position of most local authorities in the region in respect of motorsports has not significantly altered since "The Northern Motorsports Project, 1989 Issues Report".

"Only one of the thirty three local authorities in the region failed to respond to the question 'What policy does your authority have for the promotion of motorsports participation?' All four of the County Councils took the view that questions of this nature were to be determined at a local level. Cumbria County Council note that restrictions on motor recreation within the National Park do exist and will remain. Likewise, Northumberland County Council wish to balance the needs of active sports against Environmental sensitivities. Three District Councils had positive policies on motorsports provision and seven expressed interest and support for facilities in their area whilst having no formal policies. The remaining eighteen had no policies in regard to motorsports, although as many pointed out, this did not indicate a negative attitude." (1)

What has become clearer is the financial climate in which local government operates. Increasingly severe budgetary constraints have served to emasculate an emergent interest in motorsports provision and participation. It should be noted that this interest has been focused on recreational provision rather than conventional motorsports. The impact of the pressures created by the Local Government Act (1988) should have little effect on motorsports, there being only one site currently run by a District Council (Langbaourgh Motorsports).

Providing Opportunities

Whilst the interest of Local Authorities in being service providers has diminished, there are ways in which some departments are involved in motorsports participation. Workers in recreation, social service and education departments are regular users of the facilities which exist in the region. The high levels of use achieved by such departments are often founded on considerable subsidies. This can often be from the service provider, or from outside agencies, for example the Northern Motorsports Project, which has heavily

subsidised a number of participant groups. It is noticeable that when attempts are made to raise prices to more realistic levels other leisure activities are chosen ahead of motorsports. From the perspective of the workers concerned they have to provide opportunities for their clients within progressively tighter budgets. This creates a dilemma for service providers caught between maximising throughput to achieve viability, or aiming specifically at their target groups who cannot afford to pay a realistic fee, which in practice means their costs cannot be met. If local authority departments wish to see wheels park facilities continue then they have a stark choice — either subsidise users or offer on-going core financial support to service providers. Private sponsorship could also be considered an option, but whilst valuable, this is unlikely to yield the constant benefits required to ensure the existence of wheels park facilities.

Planning Constraints

Local authorities also exercise a significant power in respect of motorsports provision in their role as planning authorities. Traditionally, motorsports have been perceived as a minority interest and of little concern except when specific problems emerge. In "The Northern Motorsports Project: 1989 Issues Report" (1) it was found that only 5% of clubs had an excellent relationship. 11% had a poor relationship with 33% having no contact with their local authority. There is little evidence to suggest that this position has changed significantly, from either the local authority or club perspective.

In 1987 the Sports Council Northern Region formed the Local Authority Motorsports Forum. The Forum was intended to be a mechanism for discussion of motorsports issues affecting local authorities. An attendance level of approximately 40% representation was attained until November 1989 when the last meeting of the Forum was held. It was felt that there was insufficient interest on the part of local authorities in the region to merit the continuance of the meetings.

Motor Sport In The Countryside

What cannot be doubted is the increasing concern of planners in respect of motorised sports in the countryside. Verbal comments have been received from a number of planning departments throughout last year. In essence members are taking an increasing interest in controlling sports which they perceive as "noisy", motorsports being one such activity. This aspect is dealt with under chapter 6: Land Access. From the local authority perspective noise emissions from motorsports activity must be reduced. Planners are taking a much more cautious and restrictive attitude to prospective applications and towards existing facilities.

However, there are signs of an increasingly positive attitude towards the private sector. This may be as a result of the type of activities provided by such businesses, i.e. they are perceived as less noisy and intrusive than event orientated sites. Indoor motorsport is generally acceptable in this regard. The economic benefits of such operations may also be more clearly understood. This was recommended in the Issues Report:

"Where land is available for motorsports on a permanent basis and the local authority does not have the funding to properly develop a facility, commercial interests need to be encouraged. This need not preclude community involvement and may well prove more beneficial than struggling to obtain funding through other agencies." (1)

Direct local authority involvement in motorsports grew during the 1980s. Since 1990 the pressures of legislative and financial change have tended to increase the authorities' concentration on what are perceived as core activities. It seems unlikely that these pressures will ease in the foreseeable future. As a consequence it is unlikely that significant changes to the status quo will take place, except as mentioned above, in planning matters.

Conclusions

Local authorities operate in a political climate which is increasingly "environmentally aware". Those seeking balanced provision for motorsports are aware of the pressures this situation creates. Despite these pressures local authorities could take a far more positive attitude to the use of land for authorised motorsport. During the 1980s a great deal of derelict land has been reclaimed particularly around major conurbations. However, there are still

many areas which could be utilised for motorsports on either a formal or irregular basis, provided that local authorities take a more favourable attitude to such use. Urban fringe areas are particularly relevant in this context.

The so-called NIMBY (not in my backyard) syndrome is reflected in the attitude of many rural authorities to motor sport and recreation. It can be argued that motorsport has its traditional "home" in the countryside. Pressures from more recently conceived active leisure pursuits is tending to focus attention on land use in the countryside. However, local authorities appear to be unable to deal constructively with these demands. Where land management arrangements can be arrived at which are both flexible and sustainable they should be viewed far more positively than at present. Blanket policies which are unfavourable to all active leisure unless it is silent do not progress the issue.

The Department of the Environment, Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food, the Countryside Commission and the Sports Council could play a key role here. These organisations could offer incentives and on-going assessments of land management schemes which would enable motorsports to take place on a regular basis. Such support and encouragement could go a long way to identifying good practice for local authorities throughout the country.

The future for local authorities as direct providers looks bleak. Increasingly stringent financial and managerial constraints seem likely to prevent the expansion of so called "community facilities". Given that demand for provision remains high the vital role that can be played by the private sector should be recognised: such developments do not preclude "community access" as has been proved at Langbaugh Motorsports.

Motorsport is popular and will remain so. New forms of motorised sports and recreation are being created and all require provision. Local authorities need to accept this fact and develop policies accordingly. Ignoring the pressures will not make them disappear either amongst the public or across administrative boundaries.

5: The Governing Bodies

Introduction

There are two nationally recognised governing bodies in motorsport in England and Wales. The RAC Motorsports Association (RACSMA) controls motorcar sport and the Auto Cycle Union (ACU) motorcycle sport. However, there are a number of organisations representing either particular user groups or commercial interests who also play a role in motorsport, within and without the overall RACSMA/ACU umbrella.

The governing bodies exist to control all organisational aspects of their respective sports. The fundamental responsibility of both organisations is the advancement of their members' interests. Both are constituted nationally with regional structures and the RACSMA has certain statutory duties in respect of events held on public highways.

LARA

The Motoring Organisations Land Access and Recreation Association (known as LARA) is an umbrella body which exists to promote communication between its nine members and to pursue those areas of common interest and concern which exist between the organisations. Unlike the governing bodies it does not have a major resource base and employs one officer on a consultancy basis.

ANECC

RAC car clubs in the region belong to the Association of North East and Cumbria Car Clubs (ANECC). This organisation sub-divides into Tees-side, Tyneside and Cumbria motor sports groups. ANECC sends representatives to the RAC Regional Committee and currently the Chairman of ANECC is also the Chairman of the Regional Committee.

ACU

The Auto Cycle Union is divided into Centres. There are four which cover the Northern Region. The Northern Centre (Cumbria), the North Eastern Centre, the East Yorkshire Centre and the Yorkshire Centre. The East Yorkshire and Yorkshire Centres cover parts of the area and straddle the Sports Council's Northern and Yorkshire and Humberside regions. The Centres exercise a great deal of control over national policy within the Auto Cycle Union. The Centres elect representatives who control the organisation nationally and, therefore, the consultation and decision-making process is broad-based. It is, however, difficult for the ACU to respond quickly to some situations given the necessity to ensure the consent of the membership at Centre level.

The Governing Body Role

What should be remembered when contemplating the role of the Governing Bodies is that with the exception of a small number of professionals at national headquarters they are voluntary agencies. Without the selfless and continued hard work of volunteers, motorsport activity would quickly cease.

Because of the complexities of event organisation and control and the limited time available for volunteers to devote to their sport, the focus of club and regional bodies tends to be on technical matters. Responding to the on-going questions raised by regulations in numerous disciplines is time consuming. The process of event organisation is complex and tends to depend on a few individuals. For those reasons clubs and regional governing bodies have tended to consider development issues very briefly. By and large, contact with outside agencies has been limited to those authorising the use of land. Again, this is a consequence of time constraints.

Relationship With The Sports Council

The Sports Council's priorities are more concerned with the development of sport, either in terms of participation opportunities for their target groups or in performance and training.

The efforts to secure better links between clubs and the Sports Council have tended to founder on this cultural gap. The language of the Sports Council is, in many ways, alien to the active local organisers of motorsport. Even if this were not the case, the severe time limitations mentioned above would make resolution of this situation difficult.

The Sports Council is increasingly placing a higher value on structured introductions for new participants to sport, and on coaching to improve performance. Such schemes require resourcing from the Governing Bodies and at present the situation in this regard is in need of further development. The Northern Motorsport Project 1989 Issues Report noted the situation in the region as follows:

"The Northern Region is undergoing a disproportionate demographic change in the sixteen to twenty-four-year-old age group: a 21% decline as opposed to 16% nationally. If the clubs wish to preserve their membership over the next few years, they will have to take a positive approach towards younger members and participants." (1)

Relationships With Local Authorities

Relationships with Local Authorities differ widely throughout the Region. Whilst some clubs have regular and positive liaison, others have little or no contact. There is a need for regular dialogue between motorsports clubs and local authorities.

The ACU Training Division

The ACU has run a Training Division since 1988, now constituted as a Training Trust. From the limited resources available, training of instructors has been a priority for this project. The Northern Motorsports Project has sponsored the training of eighteen instructors during the past two years. Additionally, many groups of women and young people have been introduced to motorcycle sport through the activity of these individuals and their respective projects. The Training Trust has also supported national squads of young riders and endeavoured to offer coaching to raise their performance levels. Courses have been run by the ACU on a national basis for motorsports officials, e.g., Marshals and Clerk of the Course Training.

The RACSMA Training Fund

The RACSMA has a training fund designed to support schemes for participants and officials. During 1990 the Northern Motorsports Project attempted to develop a pilot Kart Instructor Training Scheme in the Northern Region. This scheme had the support of the kart clubs in the region and of the the Schools Karting Association North East. A framework of an instructor and participant training syllabus was written for this purpose. Unfortunately, because of difficulties experienced by the RACSMA in pursuing the initiative, the monies set aside by the Sports Council were reallocated. The RACSMA still regard such a scheme as a high priority. Additionally, the RACSMA have plans to devise a major programme of training for officials during 1991. They also intend to ensure that, eventually, all new entrants to circuit racing will have to complete an induction course before being granted a racing licence.

The efforts of both the ACU and the RACSMA to promote training are to be applauded. Nevertheless, motorsports have a good way still to go to match either the availability or quality of coaching provided in some other active pursuits. The development of performance in motorsport has traditionally relied on informal coaching and learning: there are welcome signs that this is now changing and the benefits of the sports sciences are being understood. Links with the National Coaching Foundation could be beneficial in this regard.

The National Coaching Foundation (NCF) is a Registered Charity with a trading arm, "Coachwise". NCF receives financial support from the Sports Council and offers a range of services from basic courses on coaching to a consultancy for governing bodies and other agencies.

When considering motorsports it should be remembered that this is a generic title involving twenty or more disciplines which are constantly evolving. The difficulty of progressing more than a few priorities in the field of training should be recognised in this context. It would, however, be helpful if more resources could be secured for such purposes.

Motorsports Federations

Since 1986 the Sports Council has had a strong desire to see the emergence of Regional Motorsports Federations, based on Sports Council Regions, bringing together all interested organisations, this being a recommendation of the Elson Report (2). The North West Federation was the first to be established, followed respectively by the Northern Federation and the Yorkshire and Humberside Federation.

The Northern Motorsports Federation

The Northern Motorsports Federation still has to clearly identify its role. The members appear to be uncertain about what functions the Federation can carry out, other than that of a discussion body. The latter role is undoubtedly valuable and has improved links between many organisations who previously had limited contact. If the Federation is to clarify its role and move forward the member organisations all have to consider what common interests they have. Additionally, a resource commitment will have to be made both in time

6: Land Access

Introduction

and money. Once the Northern Motorsport Development Project has ceased someone will have to undertake the administrative duties required to ensure the Federation's continuance. These basic matters, as well as the substantive issues of functions and objectives, need to be urgently considered by the Federation, and by its member organisations at national level.

When the "1989 Northern Motorsports Project Issues Report" was published considerable comment was received on the question of land access. On the basis of questionnaire returns from clubs in the region the conclusion was reached that "site availability had not significantly declined over the last few years" (1). Most club officials subsequently rejected this finding in their verbal responses to the document. Professor Elson found in 1986 that sources of land for motorsports were diminishing (2). The comments received during the last year support this view.

What this highlights is the difficulty of obtaining a clear picture of the current land access situation in the region. No satisfactory mechanism exists for obtaining an accurate current status report. The comments which follow are based on the specific cases and experiences referred to.

Motocross — The Chester Hills Experience

The discipline which has suffered most badly in this respect is moto-cross or MX (formerly known as scrambling). The Chester Hills MX track near Alnwick in Northumberland became the subject of a Public Inquiry in 1990, following enforcement action from Alnwick District Council, alleging breach of the General Development Order which restricts racing competition days to fourteen in any calendar year.

The Inspector found that the deemed planning application from the Landowner and the Governing Body was unacceptable and rejected planning permission. Furthermore, the Inspector upheld the Local Authority enforcement notice in several respects. One of the major factors in the Inspector's decision was the intrusive impact of the noise generated from the motocross machines. Many local residents complained that they were suffering significant loss of amenity because of noise emanating from events. The Inspector also prevented the development of ancillary facilities on the site. The Chester Hills track can still operate under the General Development Order for fourteen days per year, but clearly caution will have to be exercised in respect of local sensitivities to ensure the future of MX at that site.

Conclusions

The constant and growing pressure from the environmental lobby necessitates a strong response from the governing bodies. The recent developments at national level should be welcomed in this respect.

Additionally the importance in participant and organiser training programmes should be recognised at regional and national level. The steps taken over the last few years require further progression in both quantitative and qualitative terms.

The establishment of new voluntary posts at regional level could enhance the development of both training and the nature of the organised sports response to environmental pressures. Whilst this would require support at national level could the resources for this not be secured by taking relatively small amounts of finance from the higher levels of the sport?

The future of the Northern Motorsports Federation requires clarification. If that organisation is to play a role in advancing the position of motorsports its objectives and intentions should be determined and expressed clearly.

During 1989 a planning application for an MX and all-wheel drive facility at Plawsworth between Durham and Chester-le-Street was rejected. One of the principal objections of Durham City Council was the potential for noise nuisance should permission be granted.

Karting at Felton

Karting is another motor sport discipline which is currently under pressure in respect of land use. The Kart track at Felton in Northumberland has been operating for many years. During 1990 a planning application for an extension of the days of usage was rejected by Castle Morpeth Borough Council. Despite demonstrations of the proposed activity to members, it was felt that the existing permission was adequate for Northumbria Kart Club's needs. Again one of the principal objections to the application was the perception that a noise nuisance would be created. In this case that perception is difficult to sustain as the nature of the proposed activity would have been no more problematic than that generated by road vehicles in the vicinity. What has occurred in this case is that new dwellings have been converted from existing farm buildings in close proximity to the Kart track. The Borough Council has a policy of allowing planning permission to be granted to applicants wishing to convert redundant agricultural buildings to dwellings. Inevitably this sows the seeds of conflict between new residents and long-term sporting users. Furthermore in this case other noise generating leisure activities have begun to take place in the immediate area, namely micro-lighting and clay pigeon shooting.

Increasing Pressures

Noise nuisance is a difficult concept to determine. Particular circumstances differ so greatly that local authorities exercise a good deal of caution in considering planning applications. There can be no doubt that fear of noise is a major problem for motorsports interest. Convincing the public and their representatives that motorsports are not unduly noisy is increasingly difficult.

It is in this context that the separate consultation exercises currently being undertaken by the Department of the Environment and the Sports Council should be considered. Whilst these are separate initiatives they will both have significant implications for motorsport. The Department of the Environment has issued a "Draft Planning and Policy Guidance Note: Sport and Recreation" (October 1990). It is

intended to issue new planning guidelines as a result of this consultation, which will indicate how provision should be made for motorised leisure activities on land and water and in the air. The Sports Council's consultation exercise is intended to enable that organisation to determine its policy in respect of countryside leisure in an increasingly "green" environment. "A Countryside for Sport: Towards a Policy for Sport and Recreation in the Countryside" was issued for discussion in October 1990. Responses have now been received by the Sports Council who are considering their policy options.

With land use pressures increasing, the organisations mentioned above and others, for example, the Council for National Parks, are tending to the view that improved access should be granted to land outside and, sometimes, in place of, those areas traditionally used for leisure. If, as seems likely, planning authorities in areas of great landscape value tend towards a strict interpretation of their present policies, obtaining access beyond such areas will become more of a priority. Hopefully, both the Department of the Environment and the Sports Council will realise the practical implications of the policies they may adopt. Liaison with other bodies is vital in this respect, for example, removal of the motorsport restrictions on the "Set Aside" scheme could be a major step forward. "Set Aside" allows land to be utilised for non-agricultural purposes and provides financial incentives for such uses. Motorsport is specifically excluded from the scheme.

Removing access in one area must be met by improving suitable land availability elsewhere. Without so doing, the small "cowboy" element which motorsport suffers from will undoubtedly grow. These individuals do not represent motorsport, but they can, sadly, create a major nuisance for other countryside users and for the vast majority of responsible participants.

The governing bodies of motorsport are acutely aware of this problem and are actively taking measures to counter it, both individually or through LARA (see section 5). Likewise, the RAC Motor Sports Association and the Auto Cycle Union are rigorous in enforcing noise restrictions on competitors. The noise emissions of individual machines are progressively being reduced by each governing body. However, within the present context, it may be necessary to move more quickly on this issue than planned. Whilst decision-makers fear noise nuisance, whether justified or not, actual and potential motor sports sites could be lost.

The new RACSM/ACU jointly-funded Motorsports Facilities Unit should help in this regard. The Unit

will concentrate its resources on the development of venues, both permanent and temporary, and will provide a point of liaison for local authorities. The Facilities Unit will be based at the ACU offices and is intended to work alongside LARA.

Whilst these measure are laudable there may be a need to adopt a more strategic approach to planning matters. For example, obtaining statements supporting motorsports provision in both county structure and local plans may lead to positive results. This will require a major resource allocation, which at present, the governing bodies are unable to identify.

It is once again important to stress the role that policies adopted by the Department of the Environment and the Sports Council will play in determining acceptable land use for motor sports. If local access is to be maintained and improved, it is important that these organisations take a positive attitude to the future of motorsport.

The difficulties in obtaining an accurate picture of the levels and nature of access need to be overcome if this issue is to be progressed. The organisations mentioned above could play a key role in enabling this to be achieved. The danger of formalising what, at present, is informally accepted in the use of land should be recognised, and the issue should be dealt with accordingly.

Conclusions

The broad consensus appears to be that land for motorsports is becoming more difficult to obtain and retain. Policies which seek to exclude motorsports from land use cannot be dignified with the title "land management". Hoping to destroy demand by denying supply would not be considered valid either in the education or health services, why should it be regarded as legitimate in planning policy? Motorsports participants are expressing a choice which is worthy of provision: public bodies exist to facilitate choices and should devise their policies and strategies accordingly.

Postscript

After this report was drafted three developments have taken place which may have a significant effect on motorsports in the region.

1) The National Parks Review Panel has published its report which seeks to set an agenda for

major changes in the way national parks are run in the next century — while the report does not advocate a total ban on motorsports its proposals, if implemented, will inevitably lead to further pressures and restrictions on motorised recreation.

2) The Government has published a consultation paper on the use of Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) for motorsports and clay pigeon shooting. If implemented, the proposals will require all motorsport events using SSSIs to gain prior planning consent. This will be effected by the removal of permitted development rights — the "14/28 day rule". These changes will affect motorsport in the region, but will not do anything to tackle the far more widespread problem of illegal and occasionally damaging use of vehicles in sand dunes, the beach and coastal nature reserves, some of which are also SSSI.

3) The Road Traffic Bill has progressed through Parliament during 1991. One of its proposals is to extend the offences of dangerous and careless driving to cover "roads and other public places". Although the governing bodies of motorsport are negotiating reasonable exemptions for motorsport events, there is a danger that the new regulations will restrict access to forestry plantations, which are a major land resource for motorsport in the Region.



7: Community Motorsport

Responses To Auto-Crime

The problem of vehicle-related offending (auto-crime) is particularly acute in the North East. The urban centres of Tyneside, Wearside, Teesside, Consett and Durham are all badly affected.

Auto-crime can be broken down into many types. Thefts from cars are considered by some to be an aspect of auto-crime. Whilst this is a growing problem, this report is not concerned with that activity. "Professional" auto-crime is also not being dealt with here, nor are motoring offences in general.

For the purposes of this section of the report auto-crime is being addressed as a behaviour which involves young people and is motivated by a desire for excitement. This can take many forms: it can involve the riding of motorcycles on either open areas of land or on the highway, in many cases the machines having been obtained illegally. It can also be the taking of motor vehicles without the owners consent (TWOC) which is known as "joy riding" (1), mainly in cars. In volume terms the theft of cars presents the biggest problem and is in this sense the major issue confronting workers in this field. Other road users are placed at great risk from the activities of "joy riders", and there are many tragic instances of death and serious injury resulting from such behaviour. In statistical terms, motorcycle offences are a minor problem when compared with those involving motor cars.

The generation of responses to these problems has mainly been from the concern of professionals involved in face to face work with offenders. Probation officers, social workers, the police and many others have recognised that the principal motivation of the offenders involved is to obtain high levels of excitement unavailable in their daily life. In this sense the offenders are participating in motor recreation, albeit dangerously and irresponsibly. The assumption of concerned professionals is that if such excitement can be appropriately channelled, it can be a positive means of altering the attitudes of their clients.

In most local authorities' areas, illegal open-land motorcycling presents a problem. In areas of acute difficulty the issue has tended to become political. Members, inundated with complaints from residents, have sought to address the problem. In a few cases this has been through the provision of land for development as "wheel parks". These are intended to offer an opportunity for legitimate

and channelled motorcycle activity in a safe environment, satisfying the complaints of local residents and creating an exciting leisure opportunity for young people at the same time. The first major development was the "Birmingham Wheels" facility (2) and this inspired many local authorities throughout the country. However, it should be noted that Birmingham Wheels was, from the outset, designed to be used for both two- and four- wheeled activity.

In the region the authorities which have led the way in wheels park provision are Newcastle City Council, Langbaugh-on-Tees Borough Council, Sunderland Borough Council and the Borough of Barrow. Newcastle City Council developed Walker Wheels in conjunction with a voluntary body which included representation from a number of agencies. Walker Wheels was designed for motorcycle use. Langbaugh Borough Council in conjunction with the Teesside Development Corporation are developing the Langbaugh Motorsports facility. This is an ambitious plan designed to offer a multi-use facility of national significance (2).

Until 1989 the Borough of Barrow provided an area of land designated for off-road motorcycling. North Tyneside operated a participation scheme using Community Programme staff and a designated area of land. The demise of the Community Programme saw this scheme end. Shildon Town Council played a key part in developing a facility for similar purposes, but this is now run commercially. Additionally, Gateshead Metropolitan Borough Council intend to provide a wheels park on a presently active open-cast site when excavation is complete.

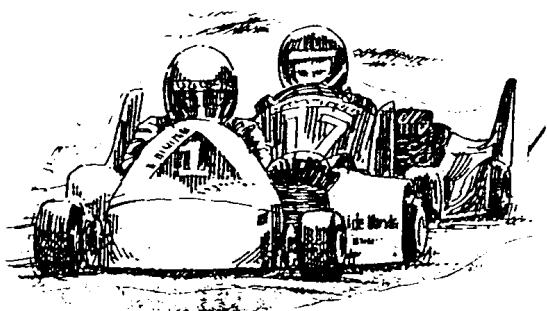
The Borough of Sunderland planning department have played a major part in assisting the development of the Warden Law facility. However, this facility, in common with the others mentioned, was primarily intended for motorcycle use.

The focus on motorcycles in respect of facility provision can be explained by the nature of activities confronting local authorities, primarily because of the areas on which it takes place. Illegal motor car use is not perceived in this way. As a result the impetus to provide land for schemes designed to combat car crime has not been strong enough to achieve positive results. The consequence is that there are three facilities in the region which are concerned with auto crime, two of which offer motorcycle use as their core activity. The

volume of motor car offences is vastly greater than that of motorcycle crime, but provision is, however, in inverse proportion to this (4).

Most wheel parks have their origins in local needs and find their realisation through the energy generated by key personalities. Several have been based on poor financial foundations. Whilst capital costs have been reasonably easy to obtain during the 1980s, particularly within urban areas, revenue funding has been extremely difficult to secure from the various grant-aiding bodies.

In order to obtain a facility, the question of medium and long-term financial viability takes a back seat whilst the energy of the founders is concentrated on quickly bringing reality to their plans. What has tended to happen over the last five years is that balances accruing from capital funding have given a false impression of financial well-being. The major de-facto revenue subsidy provided by the Community Programme was lost in 1989 and caused problems for all the facilities mentioned, with the possible exception of Shildon in its early guise. The replacement Employment Training scheme did not offer the same opportunities to minimise labour costs and as a result the schemes found themselves having either to close, e.g., North Tyneside, or reduce the levels of activity, e.g., Walker Wheels. It would not be unreasonable to suggest that more careful financial planning at the initial stages of these projects would have been desirable.



In most cases the local authorities concerned never intended to become heavily involved either financially or managerially. The Walker Wheels facility, for example, is controlled by a management committee, and is technically a voluntary agency. However, experience has shown that the management arrangements for such facilities needs careful consideration at the outset and requires strong core service support. The local authorities are clearly best placed to provide this.

Financially, the facilities in question are aimed at providing opportunities for those least able to afford to pay the actual cost. If this goal is to be maintained over time then on-going revenue support is

required. The other option is to allow potentially profitable activities to subsidise those which are not. Langbaugh is founded on this principle, as is Birmingham Wheels. In order to make this possible both the facility and the management structure have to be designed with this in mind, and some compromises may have to be made on the degree of community use. Some facilities in the region have not been so well considered.

If exciting activities are the key to channelling the energy of young auto offenders into constructive pursuits, then land will continue to be required for this purpose. There are, however, other types of vehicle-based projects which are not focused so heavily on participation. In essence the facilities above can offer a range of opportunities from either pure recreational access, to programmes of maintenance and education. They also provide land for those projects which require it as part of their particular focus.

Many groups who use the facilities provide their own machinery and supervision, e.g., South Shields and Herrington Burn YMCAs. The purpose of such groups is to make a positive attempt to alter the behaviour of the participants by means of disciplined and gradual education. Maintaining machinery and considering responsibility to others are key parts of the schemes, with riding or driving participation being the final part of a project. It can be argued that such projects have a better appreciation of the clients' needs than those which provide only an opportunity to ride or drive. Jeff Briggs, a Gateshead Social Worker, has unparalleled experience as a practitioner in this field which he has adeptly utilised in his unpublished MA thesis on auto-crime (5). Jeff's work at Clavering House (Newcastle Social Services) was mainly concerned with young recidivist auto offenders. The auto-projects at Clavering House were practical initiatives such as the building of two kit cars with the majority of the labour coming from the young people. The cars have then been raffled to raise money to ensure the continuance of the project. Jeff's practical and theoretical work have led him to the conclusion that such projects have a valuable role in altering the attitudes of the young people involved. He recognises the necessity of providing opportunities to drive the vehicles at speed in order to allow excitement to be linked to the effort put in over the months of building. This has also been recognised by the National Association of Motor Projects (NAMP) for some time. However, whilst groups from the region have been involved in NAMP for some years, a yearly championship does not provide the participation opportunities required locally. (The owners of motor car salvage yards and stock car stadia in the region should be congratulated for their support for such projects.)

The necessity for an element of competition and excitement is recognised and accepted by many workers who deal with these problems on a daily basis. Jeff Briggs comments that the normal sentencing procedure adopted by the courts does little to alter the perception of the young joy rider and may even exacerbate it.

"Furthermore, such sentences fail to consider the primary focus of the offender's interest, i.e., the motor car, and provides him with no means or provision of actually facing up to the responsibilities associated with driving safely."
(5)

Having established the poor record of traditional sentencing in reducing re-offending, the evidence of the success of motor projects is considered. The two most detailed analyses of these come from the Ilderton project, and the Belfast Motor Projects. Practitioners claim that traditional sentencing does not deter re-offending: there is a large body of anecdotal evidence to suggest that this is the case in respect of auto-crime, but sadly there are few in-depth studies to support this. What is known is that some motor projects can have an excellent success rate. For example, the Ilderton project appears to have a success rate of around 80% (5). The value of motor projects was accepted by the Home Office in its report of 1988.

"We, therefore, recommend increased community involvement (by local authorities, the police, schools, driving schools and the business sector) in the development of motor projects which provide young people not only with access to driving but also education in safe driving and social awareness and responsibility." (6)

The report also emphasises the need for caution in mixing different types of offenders in motor projects, and recognises the need for a more substantive analysis of the relative effects of disposals available to the courts. It should not be forgotten that the emphasis here has been on the value of these projects in relation to existing offenders. However, many motor projects have a wider remit and are concerned with the prevention of criminal activity. This may be characterised as, in broad terms, an intermediate treatment type of approach. Walker Wheels and Warden Law would both fall into this category.

There are those within agencies who deal with young people who question the value of motor projects. Fundamentally, they believe that channelling the energy of the individuals involved into equally challenging but non-mechanised activities may break the spell of the motor vehicle and result in changes in behaviour. The resource implications of motor projects are a consideration in this respect. Again the lack of good evidence for this contention makes it extremely difficult to evaluate. It would appear that there is a real need for a substantive appraisal of the varying approaches to dealing with auto-crime. Criteria would need to be clearly accepted in advance and any study would need careful construction. The Home Office could play a crucial part in such a process. In essence, what is lacking here is fundamental to addressing the problem of auto-crime: firstly, assessments of clients needs are at variance and secondly the means by which these are met are disputed by some key professionals. These matters require resolution.

One of the major factors in convincing some people of the limited value of motor projects is the cost of supporting them. Within the context of the social and actual costs of auto-crime, motor projects are extremely cheap. However, for those agencies actively engaged in providing educational and leisure opportunities for young people, support for a motor project can represent a major financial burden. It should be noted that there are several separate agencies involved in crime prevention, rehabilitation and facility provision.

If successful alternatives can be found which are more cost-effective, then clearly these would in many cases be preferable. The poor evidence available does not allow such calculations to be made. It is those motor projects which are service-orientated which face the largest problems. Adequate management of a facility is costly, particularly for voluntary agencies. It is likely that when such facilities are provided there will be an on-going requirement to provide revenue support as previously mentioned. These problems tend not to affect those motor projects which are local and concerned with maintenance, education and occasional recreational enjoyment. The costs of managing a facility are not felt by these projects and, as a result, they tend to find it easier to ensure continuity of existence and endeavour. The lack of substantive information on these matters has created tensions within the management of some motor projects.

Planning And Objectives

Most of the motor projects in the region, particularly those offering land access, are multi-agency initiatives. Founded on a genuine desire to combat a range of problems, the impetus to create has often masked differences which come to light once a certain level of activity has been achieved. Whilst broad goals are shared by the agencies involved, the varying interests and perceptions of each organisation tends to become manifest at later stages. This could be avoided by better planning and contractual elements being included at the outset.

Agreed and specific "mission statements" may be beneficial in this regard. Not only would these provide a focus for partners, but they would clarify the role of the projects for outside agencies. The lack of agreed methods and criteria for monitoring and evaluation is also strongly evident. The projects in the region have suffered from this particularly when arguing the case for funding. Again, this should be part of the initial planning process. There have been a number of times when the lack of objective and respected outside guidance has been noted. The consultant totem is a factor here: support which has been provided without cost to the projects has often not been maximised by the recipients. Core managerial input, in financial and planning terms, has also been a weakness of the regional schemes.

Lack of clarity on intentions and targets does not help the staff of such projects. In many cases they are pulled in several directions at once to meet the requirements of partnership members. Agreed objectives assist staff achieve more and develop their skills. This should be recognised and acted upon by those in a position so to do.

A strategic planning approach needs to be adopted if motor projects are to have a substantive future role. Clearly facilities can only be provided in a limited number of locations. These facilities will need to ensure high throughput to maximise their revenue. This could be made easier by careful design at the early stages of such projects. Secondly, support levels in both financial and managerial terms should be agreed at the outset. Cross boundary co-operation is essential in this regard.

Not all Local Authorities districts or Probation Services can have a facility in their administrative area. Mechanisms should be found to enable support to take place beyond such boundaries. This will ultimately provide a better service to all concerned. The other option is the visible and continuing pressure from workers to obtain land for

local facilities. Without a constant financial commitment such schemes have no hope of proceeding to reality. Surely it is far better to have a small number of viable, facility-based projects which are used by the smaller, local schemes. This has the benefit of guaranteeing land use for the smaller schemes, and improving revenue and political support for the facility-based projects.

Links With Motorsport

An additional area of concern is the mechanism by which those participating in such schemes go on to take part in mainstream motor sport. There are poor links between the sporting bodies and the projects described. Those presently involved in motor sport tend to have an antipathy towards such schemes, seeing them as "treats for offenders". This is understandable as in many cases they are the victims of motor car or motorcycle theft. Because of this lack of contact, no clear bridge exists between the "informal" participants and the mainstream sport. The way into the sport for the informal participant is the same as that open to many other members of the public, i.e., join a club, buy a machine and compete.

The individuals concerned are unlikely to find the first two steps easy. They will have to make a leap in socialisation to achieve the first and overcome what may not always be the most gracious of welcomes. Secondly, those with criminal records may not be able to meet either the criteria for licence holding or have sufficient income to purchase machinery. This could also affect young people without criminal records who are disadvantaged in other senses. It seems unlikely that it will be easy to create such a mechanism to bridge this gap, except in certain local circumstances. If this is the case then one has to question the purpose of creating an expectation that mainstream participation is possible. There is a narrow line between creating positive aspirations and unfairly raising expectations. The consequences of both are profound, one positive, the other negative and destructive.

The most substantive attempt to bridge that gap has taken place at Langbaugh Motorsports in Cleveland. This facility has its origin in the concern of members over the high levels of illegal motorcycle use in the Borough, and the damage to land occurring as a result. The authority also intended to raise the profile of the Borough to create a base for tourism development.

The positive work undertaken by officers and members enabled a partnership to be formed with

Conclusions

the Teesside Development Corporation. Learning the lessons of previous community-based schemes, the Langbaugh project was intended to be a means of bridging the divide between the formal and informal users. Profitable, mainly tarmac-based disciplines, would subsidise other activities, openly available to those who have not traditionally been motorsports participants. In essence, motorsport for all was the goal.

The Sports Council supported this project by grant-aiding a Community Liaison Officer post and designating the scheme a National Demonstration Project. Sadly, midway through the process of physical development, a dispute on the way to proceed with Phase 2 of the project emerged between the Local Authority and the Teesside Development Corporation. At the time of writing there are signs that this may be nearing resolution. The development process has been considerably slower than originally planned. At present the scheme is divided into two sites. The northern site has off-road areas for motorcycling and BMX, and the southern site has an international kart track. Both parts of Langbaugh Motorsports have ancillary facilities on site.

The consequences of the slower than envisaged development process on the National Demonstration Project have been documented elsewhere. Clearly, the National Demonstration Project has not made the progress originally intended. At the time of writing the original incumbent of the Community Liaison Officer post has left the project. It is expected that the post will be filled in the Summer of 1991.

The future of Langbaugh Motorsports remains unclear. The original intention to create a multi-disciplinary facility catering for all sections of society has great merit. If this objective can be realised, Langbaugh could lead the way to a new future for motorsports facilities. The work of the new Community Liaison Officer will be crucial in this regard. Whatever the outcome of the Langbaugh project valuable lessons will be learned by a number of organisations. It is hoped that these are concerned with the on-going success of the project in relation to its original goals.

All attempts to provide facilities for community motor sport have been fraught with difficulties, particularly concerning resource implications. It is clear that long term financial and operational planning is required at the outset of such schemes. This enables staff to deliver a quality service without the ongoing uncertainty generated by under funding.

The value of community motor sports should be assessed far more rigourously than has previously been the case. Resource commitments can only be guaranteed on a sound evidential basis. With a clearer picture of the benefits of such schemes the uncertainties which they face could be clarified.

In multi-agency schemes particularly, objectives should be stated and strong elements of contract included in partnership agreements. This would enable some of the structural and managerial difficulties which have been faced by schemes in the region to be removed.

Additionally a body of good practice should be developed, both in managerial terms and in respect of the content of provision. The "Bike Lore" syllabus developed at Walker Wheels is an example of such good practice which could usefully be operated under licence elsewhere.

Finally, whilst the cultural emphasis on competition so evident in recent years cannot be ignored, there exists enormous potential for the sharing of resources between schemes involved in community motorsport.

8: The Private Sector

The private sector in motorsports provision has been growing during the 1980s. More people have been attracted to the idea of trying motorsports disciplines before committing themselves to major expenditure. Additionally, the growth of corporate entertainments has offered many opportunities. From a spectator and participant perspective, stock car racing and speedway remain popular.

Stock car and speedway stadia can be found throughout the region, from Berwick to Teesside. The Sports Council does not recognise stock car racing. This is regrettable in view of the inexpensive participation opportunities it offers.

The largest growth areas in the private sector have been rally schools and indoor karting, and this is reflected in the region. The indoor karting facility at Shildon has expanded to offer "paint ball" simulated combat games as an additional facility. However, the location of this business has not enabled it to penetrate the market provided by Tyneside as fully as was hoped. Indoor karting offers an excellent means of beginning in the sport as well as being enjoyable activity in its own right. Indoor karting has recently seen a variant on itself being developed as ice karting. This is primarily designed for the corporate market and takes place at pre-booked sessions on ice rinks in the region.

Langbaugh Kart School offers outdoor karting opportunities at that facility on a number of days, mainly during the week. Likewise, the same organisation offers a rally school. Additionally, the original Town Council-led facility at Shildon is now privately operated. Off-road motorcycling is presently on offer and stock car racing should begin during 1991.

The private sector is offering basic participation opportunities to the public who can afford to pay. The opportunity to try a sport before committing oneself to it is valuable, particularly if it reduces the costs of discovering whether or not one enjoys the discipline.

The relationship between the governing bodies and the private operators has been difficult at times. However, it appears that a symbiotic relationship now exists. The former recognise the role of the latter in bringing people to the sport, and the operators acknowledge the controlling responsibility of the governing bodies. As in all business relationships, the mutual interest of the parties creates an impetus towards agreement.

What is gratifying is the positive attitude of some local authorities in the region towards private operators. This has been particularly observable in those disciplines which take place indoors. The traditional objections to giving planning consent (i.e. noise, visual intrusion, loss of amenity, etc.) clearly have no basis in such cases, hence the more accommodating attitude displayed by planning authorities than is usually the case.

Conclusions

It would seem that high quality well marketed private sector motorsports enterprises have a future. Provided that both individual and corporate clients are prepared to remain customers, such businesses will continue to offer a valuable service. However, the general issues affecting land for recreational use and the state of the broader economy will obviously play a major part in determining the future for private sector motorsport.

Postscript

During the first half of 1991 there has been a noticeable increase in commercial sites in the Region offering hire of recreational vehicles and track time, both for the hire vehicles and for customers' own. These operations are closely tied-in with the manufacture and marketing of off-road buggies and the sale of quads and motorcycles. It is thought that, in June 1991, there are some five such sites operating in the region and at least one is facing enforcement proceedings for breaching planning regulations. This commercial activity is also publicised as now offering off-road driving in remote parts of the Northumberland National Park.

9: The Warden Law Project: A Synopsis of the Project To Date

The Warden Law Project has its origins in the mid 1980's when a widespread concern emerged over levels of illegal vehicles use in the Borough of Sunderland.

The first meeting of the interested parties took place in October 1985 and included representation from the Borough Council and Probation Service and this group formed itself into a Steering Group. The Steering Group operated under the title the Sunderland Motor Project and substantial progress was made between 1985 and autumn 1986 when the Project began to look closely at its structure, meetings became formal and a constitution was discussed. The group undertook the task of creating a "wheels park" offering motor recreation and maintenance to community groups in Sunderland.

Norcare's involvement dates from 1986 when the organisation took Warden Law into its management. The Warden Law site was also identified as the geographical location of the Project in 1986, from which point the change of the name is noted.

Sunderland Borough Council played a crucial role in the acquisition of the site, buying the land from the Coal Board for the purpose of the project with the use of derelict land grants. Negotiation of the land purchase and its use was complex and required a considerable input from the Borough Planning Department and the Chairman of the Warden Law Committee.

The active role of the Apex Trust was extremely important in the first two years of the project. As a Managing Body for the Community Programme, Apex played a key role until February 1989 when Employment Training replaced the former scheme. However, for a number of reasons, the opportunities presented by the Community Programme were not fully realised, and while some progress was made on the site, disappointment was expressed that development did not proceed more quickly. October 1987 saw the appointment of a Project Leader. The post was a secondment from the Northumbria Probation Service and was filled by an experienced serving senior Probation officer. However, it should be noted that considerable amount of work had been undertaken on the site by Apex. The work on the site was based on a blueprint created by a firm of architects in Newcastle upon Tyne. These plans were extremely ambitious and envisaged residential accommodation and major landscaping. Potential sources of

funding were identified but no detailed financial plans were made for either capital or revenue requirements.

The Project Leader was assisted by a network of interested and knowledgeable parties including the Motorsports Development Officer employed by Norcare from October 1988 in a partnership with the Sports Council Northern Region.

1988 also saw the contracting by the Project Office of Newcastle University's Department of Architecture on a consultancy basis. The revised plans and practical advice provided were of great value in enabling the Project Leader to make progress.

The demise of the Community Programme and the absence of a guaranteed labour force on the site presented a major problem. The opportunity for a co-ordinated package of physical site development, motor vehicle maintenance and sporting participation disappeared at this point. To enable all three aspects to be realised would have necessitated a broader active partnership and the securing of new resources. The breadth of the Project Leader's responsibilities placed a great strain on his personal resources. It is to his enormous credit that within one year, the site was operational with designated tracks, instruction and the provision of machines. This was achieved with the employment of a supervisor/mechanic funded with two separate donations from the Prince's Trust and the Durham Probation Service. Norcare's Fundraiser played a crucial role and has offered substantial support and assistance both in terms of time and advice throughout the duration of the project.

During 1989 the Borough of Sunderland undertook major landscaping work on the site boundary. Additionally a grant from the Coalfield Initiative assisted with further reclamation work and site development. More rigorous assessments of the on-going costs of running the Project were instituted during Spring 1990. These quickly demonstrated that revenue requirements were not being met, despite the hard work and creativity of the Project Leader and staff. This realisation generated a climate in which the re-examination of the Project's purpose and direction appeared to be appropriate.

The discussions on the future of the Project were informed by a number of facts. The financial situation has already been mentioned. Questions were raised from within the Probation Service about the

value of motor projects in general. In an increasingly difficult environment the case for significant resource allocation had to be founded on sound evidence. Very little persuasive information existed to support the thesis that motor projects reduce motor vehicle crime.

During 1989 Sunderland Auto Crime Action Group was formed. The relationship of the multi-agency body to the Warden Law Project is difficult to define. Whilst 1990 saw clearer targets being set for the Auto Crime Action Group, its role seemed increasingly similar to that of the Warden Law Project. In 1989 the Auto Crime Action Group did make a successful funding bid to the Safer Cities Initiative which resulted in a minibus being purchased and loaned to the Warden Law Project.

However, the Auto Crime Action Group has always supported the Project, and during discussions about the future, expressed a willingness to be involved in its management. The group was also willing to help raise funds, although it has very few resources of its own.

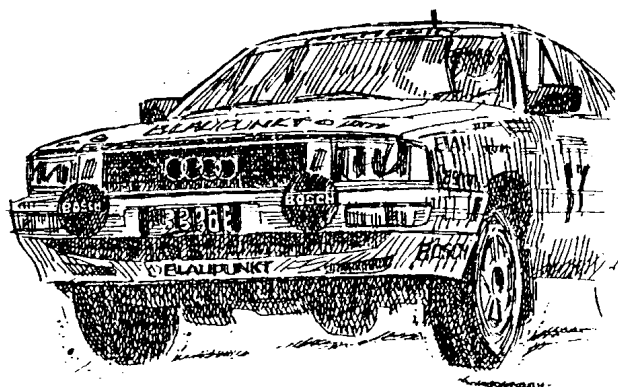
During the first few months of 1991, the Project suffered a period of great uncertainty as various options to secure its future were pursued. One by one these options failed to bear fruit, and in March 1991, the Project's activities had to be curtailed and instructional staff laid off, due to lack of funding.

However, soon after, ongoing discussions with the Borough of Sunderland resulted in new funding and management arrangements, which although very limited, secured the future of the project until March 1992.

These new arrangements involved the transfer of management from Norcare to the Sunderland Outdoor Activities Association, with some input from the Borough of Sunderland Department of Leisure Services. The funding package was provided by Northumbria Probation Service, the Department of Leisure Services, Norcare and Sunderland Safer Cities Project. Activities started again in July 1991, although to a more limited extent and the longer term future of the project is still uncertain. However, the new arrangements provide the most promising opportunities yet. When assessing the development of the Warden Law Project, it is appropriate to consider the nature of that development in the context of the time in which it took place. It is now plain to see that many of the assumptions made at the time of its establishment were unlikely to come to fruition. However, at the time these assumptions appeared to be sound and logical. The Department of the Environment in its "Good Practice in Urban Regeneration" publication (1) identifies the points of good practice for those engaged in the formation of

sport and leisure opportunities for inner areas. These provide a ready means of assessing the Warden Law Project.

There are many features of the Warden Law Project which can be commended as points of good practice, for example the driving force of committed individuals. There were key personalities involved in the development of the scheme, not least the Chairman of the Committee, Mr. Ken Armstrong, JP, who has played a crucial role throughout the entire history of the Project in generating support and enthusiasm, particularly in times when the situation did not look entirely positive. Additionally, the Project was designed to combat a real and growing problem. In this sense the Warden Law Project was a response to a local need, which has not yet been fully met. The Warden Law Management Committee has been responsive to the availability of resources and has been flexible and prepared to amend its plans according to the constraints and opportunities presented to it.



Perhaps the major weakness of the scheme was that its objectives were not clearly defined at the outset. To some extent, not clarifying objectives is a means of maintaining cohesion between a broadly based management group. To ensure the continuance of a multi-agency initiative it is often the case that compromises are made and objectives are modified in order to achieve "something". However, the tensions between parties throughout this Project have been, to a large extent, caused by the lack of an agreed outline and a clear sense of direction. Because objectives have not been adequately defined they have likewise been unmeasurable and unquantifiable. The Project leader did redefine the Project's aims during 1989 and financial targets were accepted by the management committee in respect of this. Despite this much-needed assessment, it is extremely difficult to exactly quantify the

success of the scheme. What should be noted, and has been agreed by all parties, is that the staff directly involved with the Project have worked extremely hard throughout the life of the scheme, and have shown themselves committed to the needs of the clients involved.

One of the principal weaknesses of the Project was that the site available, whilst excellent for the activities it was intended to be used for, was outside the urban area. This automatically rendered the site ineligible for some of the major capital grants from which other projects have so readily benefited. Successful revenue regeneration is to a large extent, dependent on capital input. By using a site which was ineligible for major capital input from, for example, the Department of the Environment, it proved extremely difficult to raise the profile and activity level to a point at which revenue costs were being met.

In the formation of the scheme mention was made of possible sources of funding but at no time were any detailed financial plans ever devised. Lack of financial planning meant that the Project operated on a shoestring throughout its life. No clear targets existed for either the operational staff or the respective Management Committees to judge performance until those devised during 1990/91 became accepted. Additionally, the provision of motor vehicle recreation of any kind is capital and labour intensive. It is even more expensive to provide motor vehicle recreation for those groups who are, by definition, disadvantaged and who are least able to pay. This financial reality was only realised during the operational stage of the Project during 1989/90. However, evidence existed from other schemes both within and without the region which could have been used to more accurately plan revenue requirements.

Additionally, requests for resource allocation need to be made upon a sound basis. The evidence to suggest that schemes such as the Warden Law Project have a significant effect on illegal vehicle usage is, to say the least, patchy. It is, therefore, extremely difficult to argue for ongoing and substantive funding for such a Project. The bulk of the monies for the scheme came from salary contributions provided by the Northumbria Probation Service. Most of the other donations were relatively small and specific in their intentions. Many of the grants given were for capital funding and had no relevance to the revenue requirements of the Project. It is extremely difficult to secure ongoing revenue funding for any project, let alone one which is so expensive in terms of cost per user.

Fundamentally, the financial liabilities of the scheme were beyond the reach of the agencies involved.

The fact that these difficulties did not make themselves readily apparent to all the partners until 1990 shows up another fundamental weakness. No systems of monitoring or evaluation were agreed. The Department of the Environment note that monitoring and evaluation schemes "are an essential part of the scheme's operation" (1). It is evident to all concerned that Warden Law could have benefited enormously from good monitoring and evaluation processes being agreed at the outset. This monitoring and evaluation should not only have concerned itself with the actual financial cost of the scheme, but also with the effects of participation in the Project on the clients. The lack of substantive evidence to support the view that such Projects significantly affect auto crime has been previously mentioned.

Positively, what can be learned from the Warden Law Project is that if objectives and criteria are agreed at the outset of any scheme it is far easier to identify success or failure. In the case of Warden Law it is possible to identify both strengths and weaknesses of both the establishment and the operation of the Project. The success or failure of the scheme can only be assessed from the perspective of the agencies involved, and it is for those organisations to consider their involvement from the outset and to modify or amend their procedures as is appropriate.



Notes

Chapter 2: Introduction

- (1) Northern Motorsports Project "1989 Issues Report". Available from Norcare, 20 Portland Terrace, Jesmond, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE2 1QQ.

Chapter 4: Local Authorities

- (1) Northern Motorsports Project "1989 Issues Report". Available from Norcare (see address above).

Chapter 5: The Governing Bodies

- (1) Northern Motorsports Project "1989 Issues Report". Available from Norcare (see address above).
- (2) Providing for Motorsports: From Image to Reality. Elson and others. The Sports Council, Study 28, 1986.

Land Access

- (1) Northern Motorsports Project "1989 Issues Report". Available from Norcare (see address above).
- (2) Providing for Motorsports: From Image to Reality. Elson and others. The Sports Council, Study 28, 1986.

Chapter 7: Community Motor Sport

- (1) Whilst it is commonly known as such it should be emphasised that there is no joy in joy riding.
- (2) Department of the Environment "Developing Sport and Leisure: Good Practice in Urban Regeneration" (1989) HMSO.
- (3) Sports Council Participation Demonstration Projects (1990) "Langbaugh Motorsports Project" Langbaugh on Tees Borough Council Phase I Monitoring Report. Establishing the Project. Sports Council Research Unit: Manchester.
- (4) The Northern Motorsports Project "1989 Issues Report". Available from Norcare (see address above).
- (5) Jeffery Briggs (1990) "A Profile of the Juvenile Joyrider: And the Efficacy of Motor Vehicle Projects As A Diversionary Strategy". Unpublished MA Thesis, Department of Social Policy: The University of Durham. Available from the Author.
- (6) Home Office: Standing Conference on Crime Prevention (1988) "Report of the Working Group on Car Crime". HMSO.

Chapter 9: The Warden Law Project

- (1) Department of the Environment "Developing Sport and Leisure: Good Practice in Urban Regeneration" (1989) HMSO.

APPENDIX A

The Final Report

Organisations Consulted:

Northumberland County Council
Durham County Council
Cumbria County Council
Cleveland County Council



Planning, Recreation, Social Services,
and Education, Departments.

All District Authorities within the above counties. Recreation and Planning Departments.

The five Metropolitan Authorities in the Tyne and Wear area.
Recreation, Planning, Social Services, and Education, Departments.

Northumbria and Durham Probation Services.
Northumbria Police.

The RACMSA Regionally and Nationally.
The ACU Regionally and Nationally.
The Northern Motorsports Federation.

The Project Partners.

The Warden Law Project.

All known Private Sector Operators.

APPENDIX B

Qualified Instructors in the Region

National Quad Coach: Richard Cole

National Trials Coach: Rob Edwards

Regional Trials Instructor: Harry Rogers

Regional Enduro Instructor: Jeff Sadler

Basic Training Officers: Charlie Bentley
Paul Bird
Paul Blezard
George Cranmer
Nigel Douglas
Kelvin Hutton
Jimmy Johns
Paul Langley
Bryan Mattheson
John Mensforth
Glen Metcalf
David Miller
Mike Palfreman
Stephen Price
Paul Ramsey
Peter Rylance
Graham Stafford
Andrew Thomas

Instructors may be contacted through the Northern Motorsports Project or the Auto Cycle Union.