

## QUESTION TIME – 14 JUNE 2025

### PRESENT:

Greg Potter (GP)	Club Vice Chairman
Selwyn Cooper (SC)	Executive Committee & Chair, Technical Committee
Adrian Hobbs CBE (AH)	Technical Committee
Nick Lomas (NL)	Director-General
Gordon Kossick (GK)	Head of IS
Trevor Cocks (TC)	Chair, Home Counties Division

The Home Counties Chair, Trevor Cocks welcomed all attending and thanked the panel for attending. He handed over to Nick Lomas who introduced the panel members and also thanked the Home Counties Division for hosting the event.

NL gave a brief update on the Club:

- Bookings on Club sites were doing very well, with the second best month recorded in May. Overall up 6% on budget forecast.
- Overseas travel was also doing well, offering a record 350 sites in Europe.
- Insurance renewal rates were very strong; caravan cover rates had been frozen.
- Overall financially strong, with satisfaction rates good.
- Feedback from the recent ClubFest were very high scores

### Q.1

Rachel Round asked what the Club was doing on sites to facilitate the use of electric vehicles? She pointed out that providing a charging point in the carpark was insufficient.

*NL stated that additional charging points were being added during redevelopment of sites. Welcome to charge vehicles by plugging in on pitch, via the caravan for safety reasons. Will need to pay additional charge. This would be sufficient by charging overnight to then use other charging facilities whilst out and about.*

*Not practical to fit fast charging points on site, often electrical structure was not viable especially on rural sites.*

*SC added that the Club was working with government and had recently been involved in a consultation document regarding the future of electric vehicles. Hybrid vehicles would be available until 2035, a 10 year leeway negotiated.*

*A number of other points were raised – consideration regarding the provision of drive – in / drive-out charging stations to enable car and caravan to remain attached whilst charging. Will be necessary that use of such points are closely controlled to prevent inappropriate use.*

*AH also mentioned the development of vehicles with greater range and capability of towing heavier vans. Things were changing all the time and great improvements had been made since the first EVs became available. Winchester now had a number of drive in / drive out charging points and more are being planned. He stated that within the next 20 years, there would be vehicles that were capable of towing heavier vans and also motorhomes.*

*NL said that most people travelled less than 80 miles for a weekend stay, so already possible to use a EV, but agreed there was a need for better charging facilities.*

*SC said that caravan manufacturers were looking at more aerodynamic streamlined caravans, and trying to keep weights as low as possible.*

*AH felt that EV towed better than traditional vehicles, but they do drive differently and there was a need to be aware of this. Motorhomes are based on commercial vehicles and there is also a push for better vehicles for commercial use which will be of benefit.*

#### Q.2

John Fawcus asked about the changes to weight limits for electric cars.

*SC confirmed that from 10 June 2025, anyone with a standard Category B driving license can now drive an electric vehicle weighing up to 4,250kg. This change has been made to recognise that such vehicles are typically heavier than petrol / diesel counterparts; the EV must be a zero emission vehicle. The combined towing limit remained at 7500kg.*

*For vehicles with specialist equipment for disabled passengers, the weight limit has been increased even further to 5,000kg, provided the extra 750kg comes from the specialist equipment.*

*NL added that this brought the UK in line with Europe and representation had been successful in being introduced on UK licences.*

#### Q.3

The panel were asked how did the Club decide which sites needed refurbishment? He regularly used Haycraft Club site near Swanage, which had 54 pitches and only 4 toilets which often caused issues. *NL replied that there was a 5 year rolling programme, spending £20 million annually. The standard ratios of pitches to facilities was set in the 1960s, although the Club worked on higher ratios, wherever possible. Haycraft was the exception, and despite planning application, the Club have been refused permission to extend the facilities block. Space is also restricted in blocks as the law state every toilet should have a basin. A number of complaints regarding the lack of showers at this site have been received and therefore a compromise had to be met.*

Peter Barnwell confirmed he had been touring with an electric vehicle for 4 years, including 7 weeks around Wales. He had found that quietly charging overnight worked well and appreciated the advice. *NL stated that sites could not provide 100% cover due to limited electricity supply. Research had indicated that on sites, the highest demand was between 6:30 – 9am and again after 6.30pm. The Club will be looking at metering in the future, currently being trialled on some sites. During refurbishment, solar panels were being added on facilities blocks as a way of easing the situation.*

*SC reported that at ClubFest, the Technical Team had run a Q&A session lasting 1½hours, explaining on “living off grid”, which included info on lithium batteries and solar panels. Lithium batteries in particular were coming down in price.*

*AH had a charger at home. He explained that there was a limit on the amount of power coming into the building, and if exceeded the amount available via the charger would reduce. This can also happen at external chargers when busy and users should be aware of this.*

*David Baber added that the Oxford Service Station had 20 EV points, but when he was last there, the cables were missing as they had been stolen due to the copper content.*

*NL pointed out that at Club sites, non-electric pitches can be booked and they're cheaper!*

#### Q.4

At commercial sites, you can book a particular pitch – why not at Club sites?

*NL said this question was asked regularly. Some sites were very popular and it was felt that as this was a Member Club, everyone should have the chance of getting a choice pitch – first come, first served! It had been suggested that pitches with good views for example, should be charged more, but the overall opinion was no.*

Rachel Round used a the site next to Alton Towers regularly where there was a great pitch near the reservoir with great views. There had even been arguments between members as to who was going to have it.

*NL asked all to report such behaviour to the site team. There were processes to deal with bad behaviour and the site team had the power to suspend members at the time. This would then be reviewed by the Executive Committee as to final action, and up to 20 members are expelled from the Club each year. We want to address and deal with such issues.*

Linda Allen added that she had considered booking a holiday at Southland on IOW this year, but was unable to get a guarantee of 2 pitches together for a family member and herself. She had now booked a commercial site for that reason.

*NL said members can request sites allocate pitches together for the first time this year, but this will only be finalised on arrival.*

Rachel Round always tried to book the same pitch on a site as this helped her autistic son and had no problems with this, although she was charged more to reserve the pitch – would this work?

*NL responded by recommending always talking to the site team before arrival if you had a special need such as a disability.*

John Shrubsole asked if the Club had a specific loyalty scheme as this would encourage more bookings?

*NL confirmed that there was an on-going project looking into this in more depth.*

*SC added that several members had complained they had not received the free night offers sent out occasionally. He pointed out that this was because the member had not ticked the box on their profile for marketing. GK advised that it was easy to amend – log onto website and go to profile where you can change your marketing preferences.*

Q.5

David Baber asked what the uptake on free nights was?

*NL responded by saying the offer was well received and was worth offering.*

Q.6

Denise Burrage asked why the Club did not provide a booklet advertising rallies, similar to “Out & About” circulated by The CCC? Or at least as an app?

*GK said that the details were available on the website, but not on a separate app. The information available was reliant on the Centre uploading and then keeping up-to-date. Such a provision was not currently on the radar but he would take it back and look at further.*

Q.7

The panel were asked when the winter sun rallies would be advertised / available to book?

*NL said this was imminent, looking at a 10 July release.*

*GK checked and confirmed.*

Q.8

Adrian Dawson stated that Centre websites were very variable, some good, some bad but no uniformity. He understood this was being looked at, when would there be progress?

*NL – the Review Group was currently looking at this and ways in which they could better provide support to Centres. Overall it was agreed there should be some harmonisation but agreement for all Centres would be needed.*

*GP added the topic had been discussed at the Division Forum earlier in the year, with an agreement that templates should be developed for future use.*

Adrian added it would be very helpful if rally information could be linked directly to the National website as this would improve accuracy and reduce duplication.

*GK added there was currently a huge range of websites. It was hoped it would be simple to start up and a business paper was in the process of being developed.*

Adrian pointed out that the Bucks website already used What3words plus automatic booking capability.

*GK confirmed that written confirmation was required before including Rally Officer information on a website. There was a need to have log-in facilities to restrict access as the Ros needed protection.*

Adrian confirmed that he had instigated log-ins on the website but that had not proved very successful, also preventing non and other centre members booking rallies.

Ian Grover said the topic was being looked at by the Review Group and he would take the comments etc back to the group. Overall there was a need to improve the marketing of rallies whilst keeping ROs' details separate.

#### Q.9

Graham Sawyer asked when the venue for next year's ClubFest would be released as it had not been revealed at the event this year.

*GP confirmed that due to contractual issues, the venue could not be announced, as having to go through a planning process. He promised it would be published as soon as possible. If the venue could not be confirmed, there may be a struggle as it was not easy to find the availability of 300 acres quickly.*

John Fawcus wished to thank the ClubFest Committee for a great event.

*GP said he hoped those attending completed the survey.*

#### Q.10

John Fawcus went on to ask was there an update on the Baltic Wharf site?

*NL – The lease on this site had ended 10 years ago, with short-term leases being agreed with Bristol Council who planned to build flats on the site. The Club had been looking at an alternative site and had bought land and applied for planning permission. This had been approved but then it was called in by the Environment Agency due to a potential flooding risk and planning was refused. It has been a long, painful process to get consent, taking time and effort – still on-going.*

*Both Cheddar and Cirencester have extended their opening times to compensate.*

#### Q.11

Ingrid Kirlew asked about the possible Grantham site near Belvoir Castle?

*NL – This was currently at planning stage, with challenges from the Highway Authority. The Club was always looking for new sites, but it was getting harder.*

#### Q.12

Diane Owen – via e-mail. She was a single female with a campervan and always stayed at a Club site as she knew what she was getting and felt safe. She asked about safe storage of bicycles on site.

*NL – Regrettably, some sites had been known to have had bike thefts. There was a secure store at Clumber Park and Edinburgh, but space to situate such a store at other sites was often difficult. It was considered during refurbishments.*

Q.13

Diane Owen – via e-mail. She required a site that provided toilet facilities, so often had to use a toilet tent. Why do some sites, such as Borrowdale which she used regularly not offer these facilities?

*NL – It was not possible to provide toilet facilities at Borrowdale due to restrictions imposed by the National Trust. There are 10 sites on the network where toilets are not provided for similar reasons.*

Q.14

Diane Owen – via e-mail. Diane's query related to pricing. At ClubFest, there appeared to be one price – for a family of 5!. Why no discounts for singles?

*GP – At ClubFest, all children under 18 go free as we try to encourage families to join us, hence why the adverts use families. There are other pricing options, for example a pitch price + single occupant. Looking at how to improve the booking system and ensuring no one is left out!*

TC thanked all for attending the day and it was hoped attendees would enjoy visiting the museum. He also thanked the Bucks Centre for running an rally in conjunction with the event.