

## **MGCC Midland Centre AGM – 21<sup>st</sup> March 2022**

### **Midland Centre – IT & Communications Report for 2021.**

**Outline for change** - The initial upgrades of the Midland Centre website, together with a new Centre email system and the beginning of new Social Media interactions were completed during 2019. When the Covid-19 pandemic started in March 2020 this meant personal and formal restrictions upon 'normal life' and resulted in the inability to hold the face-to-face meetings that had been used in the past. The Centre quickly embraced the 'New gift' of the ZOOM platform to enable it to continue to hold monthly committee meetings and at least discuss the situation and plan for the time it's events could commence once more.

This period of uncertainty returned during Q1/2021 due to further restrictions and lockdowns because of increased Covid-19 infection rates but this time created the desire and opportunity for the IT & Communications part of the committee to improve the methods, the regularity, and the speed for how the Midland Centre could update the membership with the very latest situation and improve it's electronic and online contacts. During these months it was hoped that the Midland Centre would be able to commence the previously postponed calendar of events which now totalled 13 specific Sporting & Social meetings during the mid-part of the year, so it was critical that pro-active forms of communications were used to announce this to the membership.

**Newsletters** – Commencing April 2021 the Spring Newsletter was sent using the 'Mailchimp' platform to 980 of the 1,224 Midland Centre Members advising them of the Centres planned activity commencing with the 'Spring Sprint' at Curborough, the first Sporting event for many months. This newsletter was followed in May, June, July, and August, once again giving the increasing Midland Centre Membership numbers a regular and informative message of all activities, they could selectively choose to attend. The final Newsletter of the year, the Christmas version was sent to 1,021 of the 1,253 members. It should be noted that in 2021 the Midland Centre Membership showed the largest growth of members throughout all of the MG Car Clubs Regions, a very pleasing result. In 2021, a total of 3,646 individual Members opened the various Newsletters which must surely give them a positive feeling that the Centre cares for them.

**Midland Centre Website** – Progressive development during 2021 rather than large scale changes gave consistent informative updates of all forthcoming events, past event meeting reports, and details of the main contacts and local Natter meets. The '**Events**' page on the website contains access to both the Colour and B&W versions of the downloadable calendar list of the diary. Links to all Booking forms, event entry forms and regulations are contained within the site and a brief 'Next Event' summary is located on the index page.

**New On-Line Booking and Entry forms** – The past two years have seen many companies streamlining their systems and communications to more online versions. The Midland Centre has certainly been keeping up with this type of development and in addition to the Newsletters & Website upgrades, commencing July 2021 the Centre launched its new online form completion using the 'JotForm' platform. The first form used was the

Declaration Forms required to be completed by Competitors, Marshalls, Officials and Media for the August Summer Sprint to be held at Curborough on 1<sup>st</sup> August 2021. This was successfully completed by the majority and considered to be the best way the Midland Centre should begin to obtain the correct information for their events in the future.

Since this initial Form was developed, further forms have been created and used for, Three counties Road Run, the Autumn & Taster Trial, (both as entry forms and declarations), New Year's day 2022 'Chilly Willy Run' (sadly needing to be postponed at the last minute) , a Booking form for the Welsh Touring Rally, the Spring Sprint 2022 entry and declarations and the 'Drive it Day' Run entries for 24<sup>th</sup> April 2022.

During the time these forms have been used, the familiarity of creating them and continued development of them recognises there are some very clever options being used to give all parties who are involved, more information with certain extra conditions being shown dependant on the previous questions.

**Facebook** – Often a 'Marmite' response when discussing this Social Media format with our Membership and Committee, it is nevertheless an extremely useful, immediate, and responsive tool to get information to people. The ability to link to other 'MG' sites, both local and national means that it is easy to share our posts to their Groups to widen the net of knowledge of either Midland Centre events or news very quickly. Recently it has been possible to have our regular Newsletter automatically posted to our Centre Facebook page which ensures continued exposure.

The 'latest' tool in the box is the ability to host on our Facebook page 'real time' videos of the MG Car Club Racing events, the first happened on Sunday 20<sup>th</sup> March using the Brands Hatch races for MG Cup and MG Metro Cup.

In 2021, the Midland Centre Facebook page reached 9,688 people and received 1,792 clicks, so its possible to see how many are accessing our details. I suggest that all Committee members begin viewing regularly and hopefully sharing to their own circle of friends and groups..... as some used to say "You know it makes sense"!!

**General Marketing and Further Developments in 2022-** To enhance the look of the new Media platforms the Centre are involved with, a refreshed Midland Centre Logo and scheme has been produced which can be colour-modified to fit any complimentary scheme and because of the increased activity & attendance at meetings like the 'Gaydon Gatherings', 'MG & Triumph Weekends' the Centre has produced business cards and car window rondels using this new theme to give out to Members to promote the Centre. Themed adverts, header templates and images have been produced for all events during 2021 and used as promotion together with large A3 foamex boards and smaller A4 & A5 sized flyers for awareness and marketing. It is hoped that this whole area will continue to develop during 2022.

*David Wood –*

*MGCC Midland Centre IT, Communication and Website Support – March 2022*