

Minutes of Silk Route Motorhome Network EGM 2014

Malvern 30 August 2014

Agenda

Previously circulated

Attendees

Champa and Chad Soma, Stephen Stewart, Michele Maynard, Ian and Roma Smith, Patricia Tribelhorn, Les Brook, Norman Seddon, Clare Dyson and Darren Oliver.

New members Paul and Jenny Hopkinson, Ginny and Alan Williams were welcomed.

In the absence of any other offers Ginny agreed to take the minutes of the meeting.

Apologies were received from Pat and Neil Hay, Steve Kaczmarek and Annie Thorne, Maureen Middleton, Margaret Brook, Mike and Valerie Ratcliffe, Clive and Ann Barker who had also submitted a document for discussion at the meeting.

Champa advised that 52 emails had been sent and she had received 26 responses. Some members have resigned and others wish to remain members. It is possible that there were some who wished to attend whose names may have been omitted from these minutes.

Best wishes were sent to Annie Thorne and Pat Hay.

Welcome

In her capacity as outgoing Treasurer and sole remaining member of the Committee, Champa Soma welcomed everyone and thanked them for attending. She explained that the purpose of the meeting was to discuss the way forward for the SRMN and thanked Clive and Ann Barker for all their hard work and production of the discussion document.

Introductions

Everyone attending introduced themselves (and their partners where relevant) giving a brief outline of their background, membership of SRMN, travel experiences and future plans.

Treasurer's report

Champa advised that the SRMN is in credit by £710.21, the only outstanding expense being the hire of the hall for the EGM. There are no other known debts. There had been no significant expenditure in recent months.

There was a brief discussion over the expenditure of £500 in November for the proposed new SION website work. It was agreed that Clare Dyson would contact the designer Sebastian Zareba of Web Solutions Workshop to see if there was any money due back to SRMN since the work had been put on hold. (Action CD)

It was agreed that Paul Hopkinson and Alan Williams would be additional signatories to the SRMN bank account since Champa will shortly be travelling for several months. (Action CS, PH, AW)

Where do we go from here?

There was considerable discussion over the way forward. All those attending were keen for the network to continue and expressed their support for it.

Les Brook encouraged everyone to consider what the purpose of the network was and what its aims were. Again there was considerable discussion about this and many members stressed the importance to them and the value of personal contact. Strong emphasis was placed on help and friendship and there was a strong feeling that the SRMN should not become a commercial organisation.

It was agreed that the network's main aims were:

- the provision and exchange of information
- mutual support and inspiration between members
- to foster friendship between members by including social events, this is particularly important for those members who are no longer able to travel
- enabling an environment where members may be able to plan joint trips together

Comparisons were made with the French group who have a large membership and organise many social events, trips and so on.

There was also discussion re whether there were any similar organisations in the UK but it was agreed that anything similar to SRMN was run on a commercial basis.

Stephen Stewart advised that the SRMN forum has some 200 members.

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Les Brook suggested that a database should be kept. It was agreed that this would be a valuable resource but concern was expressed about the time and cost of administering this and maintaining it.

Fees

There followed discussion about whether or not the SRMN should charge a fee for membership as members receive very little in concrete terms for their fee. It was agreed that the concept of members committing to the aims of the SRMN should be explored, rather than asking for a fee.

There was debate over whether fees should be abolished or suspended. In view of the difficulties connected with abolition and because there could be future expenditure, it was agreed that fees would be suspended.

Website

In his capacity as Webmaster, Stephen will liaise with Clive and Ann re the possibility of including some or all of the proposed newsletter on the website (**Action SS, CB and AB**)

Clare Dyson and/or Champa Soma to contact Ian Cassidy to accept his offer of assisting SS with the web. (**Action CS/CD**)

Certain information e.g the newsletter may again be password protected for members only, this requires further discussion.

Clare Dyson to speak to Sebastian Zareba to see if any of the work he has done for the website can be used and liaise with Stephen (**Action CD and SS**)

Stephen advised that 3 domain names had been registered for the proposed new SION website (silkrouteuk.org, silkrouteuk.net, silkrouteuk.co.uk). These names were all registered to Linda Jayes. They all expire in about one year unless renewed.

Stephen also said that he had paid for the registration of the domain name of the existing website (Silkroute.org.uk) and for its hosting since 2002. He said he was happy to pay the approx £120 per year to keep the SRMN website on-line. He was thanked for this.

There was brief discussion re Data Protection and it was thought advisable for members' information not to be circulated. Both Champa and Stephen have a list of members.

Meeting adjourned for lunch

In the afternoon session the way forward was unanimously agreed by all those attending.

It is as follows:

Way forward

1. Membership fees will be suspended for the time being, if it becomes necessary to reintroduce them for future expenditure then this will be reviewed. At present, given the current bank balance, there is no need for subscriptions.

2. The SRMN forum will slowly become a members' only forum

New and existing members will be asked to complete a form giving basic information about themselves and will state how they can commit to the aims of the club. Members will join as a 'crew' per vehicle. The information which members are able to provide could form the equivalent of a database of knowledge.

Commitment could be by, for example

- provision of technical advice or expertise
- sharing knowledge re countries visited, visa requirements etc (countries can be listed under profile)
- volunteering to run one of the SRMN events
- volunteering to write an article for the newsletter
- posting a blog or article on the website
- provision of support and assistance when called upon by other members
- etc etc

Once the profile has been completed the crew will then be admitted as member of the SRMN by a forum moderator.

3. There will no longer be a formal committee but it was agreed that Champa will continue in her capacity as Treasurer and Stephen Stewart as Webmaster.

Both Champa and Stephen indicated that they would be happy to relinquish their roles if anyone else wished to take them on. There were no volunteers at the meeting.

4. Quarterly newsletter as proposed by Clive and Ann Barker. Their offer of editing the newsletter was gratefully accepted by all those attending.

5. Annual meeting for members to present slides of trips and to network. Possibility of other informal meet ups at major overland events.

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6. Members' blogs to provide link to website and vice versa (**Action SS and all members with blogs**)

It was agreed that the minutes containing this new framework be circulated to all current members for their approval and that it would be regarded as formally endorsed if those against are fewer than the attendees at the EGM who had approved the new proposed framework. Members to respond to general@silkroute.org.uk and cc to treasurer@silkroute.org.uk

Subject to this endorsement, Les will prepare for circulation a more detailed statement on implementation. (**Action LB**)

AOB

Norman agreed to organise next year's meeting (**Action NS**)

As normal, this will include social event and presentations by members. Clare will bring projector. (**Action CD**)

Les advised that he had been writing a biography of an overland traveller of the 1920s, John Weston and his work can be found at johnwestonpioneer.info

There was a vote of thanks to Champa for her hard work and energy both in organising the meeting and safeguarding the SRMN's future.

The meeting concluded and an impromptu barbecue was held in the evening.