

Sorry, but this is Not Good News

Dear Members,

I'm afraid this update does not contain good news. Over the last few weeks The Club has been working on its approach to support Centres, in preparation for being able to rally again. This included preparing the Guidance which we have previously shared with you all. Today we have had a further update from The Club, key elements of which, I share with you now.

Last week, at the same time as the Prime Minister's welcome announcement that caravan parks were able to re-open from 4th July in England, a new and unexpected provision was factored into the guidance around '[meeting up](#)' (press the word meeting up and you should be taken to the [gov.uk](#) website) which stated that it would be illegal for gatherings of more than 30 people to take place. The Club have been keen to stress the word illegal here because unlike other guidance, this specific provision will be written into law. Since before the lockdown, and since, The Club has asserted, that a rally was only for the siting/parking of leisure vehicles and that no social aspects of a rally would take place, so it was felt rallies could be made possible as lockdown eased. However, there is now a very strong concern that by the manner in which a rally is organised through a Centre, to enable a group to come together for a common cause, it is much more difficult to argue that a rally is not a gathering as now defined by the Government. The spirit of the Coronavirus legislation is to reduce the risks of the virus spreading which are associated with large groups of people coming together. The Club has received advice which indicates that rallies are likely to attract the attention of local police forces as being gatherings, particularly because there is a lot of nervousness in local populations in tourist areas about the spread of the virus.

In the absence of clear guidance in this area from the Government at this time, the Club's Executive Committee discussed the situation at length this morning (Monday 29th June) and reached the conclusion that **all rallies for July should be cancelled**. This means that the exemption certificate (under which rallies are able to

operate - more on this later) will be withdrawn for the month of July for everyone. The Club's Executive Committee will reassess the situation on 20th July to give advice to Centres about those rallies which are currently planned to take place in August, and beyond.

As your Committee, we have worked very hard behind the scenes and have done everything to support a safe return to rallying in July. We believe that it was a difficult decision The Club has had to make. We are all very aware of the disappointment this will cause - why - because we were going to be Rallying too and we are gutted by this announcement.

However, the overriding feeling from The Club, was that the safety of the members and volunteers must be paramount. This has to be the same for us as a Centre. The Club also has a responsibility to comply with the law, so has interpreted it in a way that doesn't compromise Ralliers and Rally Officer. Indeed it would be unfair for Sussex Police to be called by people complaining about a gathering being held. I am sure, like me, you would rather they direct their valuable resources to elsewhere than to a Rally field.

Rally Secretary, Chris will be liaising once again with Landowners, to see what might be possible for August.

We will not be making any more announcements about future 'real' Rallies until we have heard more from The Club and reach further Committee decisions.

Exemption Certificate

Usually people need a specific license to use an area as a campsite. The reason we can rally at all is because The Club holds an 'Exemption Certificate' from the need to have a Camping or Caravanning Site licence and planning permission. Being a Centre of The Club is the basis upon which we can make arrangements with Landowners to rally, legally on their land. The withdrawal of the Exemption Certificate by The Club means we cannot Rally in July. If you would like to know more, please use this link: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/camping-and-caravanning-site-exemption-certificates-know-the-rules-and-how-to-apply>

Holiday Rally

I can announce that the Holiday Rally will still be going ahead. This is because in our decision to move the rally to England, it is now booked as a Rally on a Commercial site. This means we rally at a commercially licensed Caravan Site which doesn't require the use of The Club's Exemption Certificate.

Throughout lockdown and recently, Chris, as our Rally Secretary, has received lots of expressions of interest from people wanting to potentially book onto the Holiday Rally, this is in addition to those who were already booked on. Chris has held onto those enquiries and will be contacting those members to get these enquiries turned into confirmed bookings, with priority being given to Centre Members. If all these bookings get confirmed the rally will be nearly fully booked. Chris is going to liaise with the Site to see if there are any more spaces which can be given to us. Resultantly, we won't be opening booking opportunities via the website, because this could give rise to many application forms being completed and submitted far beyond our capacity to match demand. If you are interested in being able to attend the Holiday Rally, please email Chris at rallysecretary@eastsussexcc.org.uk

Once again we know how disappointing this will be. All we can ask is for your patience and understanding as we try, as your Committee, to do what we can. We are still looking forward to seeing you all on a field...one day.

Kindest regards,

Sue Smith
Chairman
East Sussex Centre