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MOTOR SPORTS COUNCIL MEETING AND ANNUAL DINNER

The Motor Sports Council held its annual dinner yesterday (Thursday) at the Royal Automobile Club in London's Pall Mall.

Last night's event was the first to be held under the new Chairman of the Council, Graham Stoker, following Michael Southcombe's retirement at the end of last year. The Council members took the opportunity to recognise the unprecedented service given by Mr Southcombe, who has been involved in the governance of motor sport for over 40 years, including the last 14 years as Chairman of the Council. Motor Sports Association chairman John Grant presented him with a commemorative Armada dish (see accompanying picture) and announced his appointment as Honorary Vice-President of Council.

Also present among the guests was Professor Sid Watkins, Formula 1's Medical Director.

Earlier in the day, Graham Stoker chaired his first Motor Sports Council meeting. His address to Council members outlined his ambitions about the future role of the Council and called upon Council members to be more open and visible to the people whose interests they represent.

An ardent enthusiast himself, Mr Stoker underlined his commitment to the grassroots of motor sport while stressing that both the professional end of the sport and the amateur participants would each be weaker without the other.

As a lawyer, Mr Stoker pledged to make the sport's regulations easier to understand in the hope that competitors might develop a better knowledge of the rule book. As well as creating new rules, the role of Council, he said, included simplifying and improving existing rules, and debating key policy issues.

Two significant decisions were ratified by the Motor Sports Council yesterday. The reinstatement of the Black and Yellow quartered flag for Short Circuit karting followed the recommendations of the Safety Advisory Panel and takes immediate effect.

Also with immediate effect, the Council agreed that competitors in the year of their 16th birthday, who are entitled to an International B Kart Licence (or are otherwise approved by the MSA) and who pass a written examination may apply for a National B Race Licence which will be issued to the Race Organising Club. The use of this licence will be restricted to specifically approved Race Championships and the MSA's Vehicle Safety Group have established very strict criteria for such approval to be granted. The licence itself will be held by the Club until the competitors reach their 16th Birthday.

Ends