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## MOTOR SPORTS ASSOCIATION DETAILS SAFETY MEASURES TO SAFEGUARD FUTURE OF NETWORK Q RALLY OF GREAT BRITAIN

The Motor Sports Association, the national governing body of motor sport in the UK, detailed today a raft of improvements to safety measures in place for this year's Network Q Rally of Great of Britain, which takes place next weekend (14-17 November 2002).

At a media briefing on the operational aspects of the event held today (Tuesday) at Motor Sports House, Colnbrook, senior officials from the event explained the detailed plans that have been implemented to strengthen safety standards on Britain's forthcoming round of the World Rally Championship.

New ticketing procedures are already in effect, which will not only position spectators in controlled viewing areas, but also will contribute to easier access and a better spectator experience at the UK's most popular sporting event. Advance ticket sales have increased, with 150,000 people expected to visit the Network Q over the four days.

Hand-in-hand with this policy will be a higher concentration on spectator safety management than ever before, as the Motor Sports Association seeks to establish its round of the WRC as an international benchmark and set new standards for the whole of UK rallying.

New measures have been introduced as a result of a widespread review of rallying in the UK, undertaken by the Motor Sports Association's Rally Safety Study Group. The report was commissioned by the governing body in the wake of serious accidents in national rallying, culminating in Carlos Sainz's incident involving spectators on last year's Network Q Rally of Great Britain.

Over the past six months, more than 2600 volunteer marshals took part in a series of nationwide seminars organised by the Motor Sports Association, which provided specific rally training, with clubs consequently running their own training sessions. As a result, no fewer than 2800 have subsequently joined the National Register of rally marshals, which forms a cornerstone of the Motor Sports Association's ongoing commitment to spectator, official and competitor safety across UK rallying.

Those officials present included Colin Hilton, chief executive of the Motor Sports Association, Andrew Coe, chief executive of International Motor Sports - the MSA's commercial arm and organiser of the Network Q - Fred Gallagher, Clerk of the Course for the Network Q Rally of Great Britain and Sue Sanders-Peppitt, Spectator Safety Officer. Sue was appointed to this key position in the Network Q team earlier this year and is responsible for the preparation and implementation of the official spectator Safety Plan - this new role further underlines the organisers' determination to ensure safety is a continuing priority.

### QUOTES

Colin Hilton, Chief Executive, Motor Sports Association

"We fully acknowledge that the British Grand Prix and Rally of Great Britain will always be under constant threat with other nations wanting rounds of these FIA World Championships, so we have to ensure our events

remain world class if we wish to keep these events in the UK.

"As a result of incidents on stage rallies over the past two years, the Motor Sport Association commissioned an independent Rally Safety Study Group to carry out a wide-ranging review of safety procedures on stage rallies. These recommendations have been implemented over the last eight months leading up to the Network Q Rally of Great Britain. Rallying will always hold inherent dangers, but it is up to all of us to put measures in place to manage this risk."

Andrew Coe, Chief Executive, International Motor Sports

"We have an absolute commitment to safety, but face new challenges as the sport gains in popularity, resulting in more and more people wanting to experience the event. We have two primary objectives - to guarantee greater enjoyment for fans, while doing everything we can to ensure spectators are as safe as possible and thus avoid stages being cancelled on grounds of safety. Our new ticketing policy is aimed at making the entire experience as convenient as possible, by providing reserved parking, good access and spectacular viewing areas. Moreover, we are confident that marshals will be more aware this year thanks to the Motor Sports Association's initiative setting up the Rally Marshals National Register."

Fred Gallagher, Clerk of the Course, 2002 Network Q Rally of Great Britain

"The World Rally Championship has been turned on its head over the past few seasons. Events are now shorter and more concentrated, as a result speeds are higher, the action is more exciting, more people are attracted, drivers push closer to the limit and therefore there are more accidents. It's up to us to contend with this growing trend and we won't hesitate to cancel a special stage if we feel anyone's safety is threatened. With new events in North America, Japan and Asia all vying for one of the 14 rounds of the World Rally Championship, we cannot afford to put our event at risk."

Sue Sanders-Peppitt, Spectator Safety Officer, 2002 Network Q Rally of Great Britain

"The Rally of Great Britain has an enviable safety record and has never had a special stage cancelled for spectator safety reasons. However, we cannot be complacent, more so as the event is now attracting a new breed of spectator with less rally experience. Under FIA regulations, it is no longer permissible for the public to walk along the special stage route so we've had to totally rethink our spectator strategy. To that end, we have developed special viewing areas with access direct from car parks or via prepared walkways. Moreover, with the help of Forest Enterprise and local landowners, we have cleared trees to provide hitherto unavailable vantage points. We have come a long way already, but to continue this improvement we must recognise that this is just a start."

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