

Dear Friends,

A very warm welcome to our second quarterly-ish Newsletter keeping you up to date with progress on your Ben Fund. This quarter has been a busy time and a steep learning curve, establishing what works best at each of the tracks. We still have a great deal to learn but we are beginning to see a clear picture emerge, so next year will be more effective, better planned and bigger.

Fundraising update

We have so far collected over £7,000 in total, including some donations from promoters, and there is more coming in all the time. Promoters have also made a welcome contribution towards set-up costs, so that donations are not used to pay for admin. Every penny really does go directly to help an injured driver.

Bucket collections are not an efficient means of generating enough funds to cope with the enormity of the FORDS commitment. They will continue to be seen, as they are vital in raising awareness and keeping us in direct contact with staff, drivers and the public - the value of this cannot be overstated. But we are looking to capitalise on proven successes such as the Mendips and Buxton raffles, Spedeworth pit pass sales and Nutts Corner Oval's competition. The £1800 plus raised in one go by Spedeworth's Westy meeting is simply astounding.

At this point a special mention must go to RDC for their courageous decision to take a domestic meeting and attempt to attract support for it through FORDS. They also made an open commitment by pledging to match any extra donations made by the drivers, the first promoter to do so, raising nearly £900 in one weekend. It's early days, but this unremarkable figure hides an outstanding generosity by drivers and public alike. The very next weekend, Trackstar opted to follow RDC's lead and also invited drivers to make an extra pound donation - which they too pledged to match! So we believe this idea can only grow from here.

We plan to get all formulae involved in some specific way and the first of these plans to be rolled out will be the "Adopt a Robin" scheme. An ideal gift for children, this will probably be priced at £30-40 and will consist of a certificate of adoption and a signed photograph of the driver with his car; the Robin will get a sticker or if possible signwriting "Adopted by Little Johnny for FORDS". Early market research suggests this could be popular, and several drivers have already expressed an interest.

Help with fundraising

Fundraising possibilities at some tracks have been limited by secretary Manuela and our valued Friend for Scotland Murphy being alone collecting or organising. We do need volunteers and tackling this difficult problem is high on our agenda for next year. We are of course conscious of how busy promoters are on race day and therefore cannot reasonably expect staff to be available to help us.

Our thanks to the promoters of Skegness, Crimond and Nutts Corner Oval and Lochgelly who for different reasons ran their own fundraisers without us, and to Mendips, Buxton, Incarace, Spedeworth, GMP and RDC for their much appreciated help. Also thanks to PRI for inviting us back again and to everyone who has contributed superb fundraising ideas and welcomed us so warmly.

We have been offered ideas, donations including raffle prizes and help from drivers, track staff and the public, and some pictures from photographers. These are gratefully received and much needed. We currently have 2 car raffles - Startrax are running one and Buxton the other. For tickets please contact the promoters direct or FORDS. We have also been offered a slightly different, fun one for next year so watch this space. All I can say is that it will be built once the driver has recovered from his injury.

Claims

To date we have received ten claims and paid out £3350 - over £2000 of this in August alone - and we are expecting this to rise as drivers get to know about FORDS. We are aware that many more injuries have occurred and hope next year to be in a position to actively contact drivers who have been injured. So far we have paid only the fixed rate £50 per week and made no awards under the Hardship Fund. Thanks to all the promoters, and Sharon Blood of the F2 Ben Fund, who have put injured drivers in touch with us, as well as drivers who have told their friends.

There is a common belief that FORDS does not cover F1 and F2 drivers, or else that we do cover them and therefore those drivers have more money. The position is as follows: Those Ben Funds continue exactly as they are. FORDS will pay any shortfall between their payout and what we would pay to any other driver. This is both in terms of the amount paid and the length of time it is paid.

Public Information

We have stopped publishing amounts raised as a matter of course. A figure out of context does not give a true picture of an event's success. However there are no secrets and we will happily give details on request.

Over the winter we will be making contact with all websites and publications related to racing, in order to reach drivers and the public who are not yet aware of FORDS. We plan a revised leaflet though we do not propose a bulk mailshot exercise to drivers again. We will also be continuing an awareness exercise with ORCi affiliated formulas who have somehow been missed so far.

Website

Our website is now fully live at www.fords-care.com; however in use we have found that we need more from it and this work will be carried out over the winter while racing is quieter and our web man's work also gives him time for us. Changes will include a Bulletins page for big news that needs to remain visible for longer, the donation facility, and some cosmetic improvements.

Planned fundraisers until the end of this year:

- 18th September Arena Essex 41st ORCi Banger World Championship + Ministox
- 2nd October Taunton Smeatharpe BriSCA F2, Bangers, Saloon Stock Cars
- 20th November Wimbledon 2.0 Hot Rods, Lightning Rods, Superstox & 1300 Stock Cars
- 26th November Birmingham Wheels Champion of Champions + Ministox
- 18th December Barford Raceway Unlimited Bangers Blitz, Junior Bangers & Banger Rods

Secretary's comment:

We are in the very early days of something very big - far bigger than I could ever have hoped or imagined when I set out, incredibly less than two years ago, armed with an orange B&Q bucket to help a stranger fallen on hard times. With the support of drivers, staff and the public, it has developed a life force of its own - and it is here to stay. I feel honoured to be part of this important work and thank everyone who is working so hard to make it the success it deserves to be. Nothing makes me happier than to hear a driver say, "You don't realise how important this is until it happens to you".

Thank you for your time reading this newsletter and for your support of FORDS.

(To unsubscribe at any time just phone or e-mail)

Newsletter no 2: September 2011

Page 2 of 2