

Christmas Newsletter

Dear Friends,

Welcome to the latest quarterly-ish newsletter keeping you up to date with progress on your Ben Fund. As we come to the end of our first full year, the Fund is beginning to take shape and grow some secure roots. With over £25,000 raised and more still due in, we've been able to pay out more than half of this to injured drivers and still start next year with a healthy bank balance. Just a few brief comments on this, because the Spring newsletter will be for a more detailed review of the past year.

Fundraising - brief summary

Despite a quiet first half of the year (due to transport problems) there have been some outstanding efforts for FORDS - Nicci Noo's Stockarts Ladies' Race and Kewy v Godfrey's Big Bike Race spring to mind. Dan Moth with his full and frank 'access all areas' Bears Banger Team DVD has made a tremendous contribution, at £3,500 and still counting. Ryan Wright's 311 Steve Newman stickers raised just under £500, and a special thank you to Tracey Killick who bought a Chris Haird model shell specially to re-sell for FORDS.

A mention for the top three promoters, too. At Crimond, Bill Barrack, Chris 'Chewy' Cartmel & co raised over £900 with passenger rides and camping charges. RDC's Mildenhall Big Raffle, Dover collection and a £1 from drivers matched by RDC themselves generated a record-breaking £1400! And PRI's Debbie tirelessly sold raffle tickets at every meeting to raise awareness and a superb nearly £500.

Fundraising - looking forward

The announcement of a Banger Mechanics Championship for 2013 was possibly the biggest news of the year. With promoters free to use any formula for their Qualifiers it's likely most will be in their own limited contact formula. We already know the Finals will be held at Ipswich but there are more exciting details on that still to be released!

There will be another Stockarts Ladies' Race and possibly another one as well, as we're looking to gradually build up these 'formula events' which have far greater potential than track collections and give people more opportunity to get involved.

Another very exciting announcement is Tullyroan's FORDS Ireland Championship, the Tony 'Happy' Gilmore Memorial in aid of FORDS over St Patrick's weekend, with a packed racing programme, a band and a chance to raise a glass to Tony, who lost his battle with cancer last year aged just 46. Our thanks to Tony's family, Davy and Doris McCall, Darren Black and Greg O'Connor for your support and may it be a fantastic weekend in Tony's honour.

We're looking for sponsors for these events and more - so if you have your own business, racing-related or not, or just want to support the Fund and put your name to a trophy, we'd love to hear from you.

We've also got a very special item coming to eBay over the Christmas period so stay awake!



Our Phone Number

We have a new number * **0333 577 5422** * please note! This non-geo number is owned by FORDS so that we will never need to change it if the office should move. 0333 numbers are charged at **local** call rates and are **included** in your minutes if you have a calls package, for both landlines and mobiles. You can still use the geo landline number 0117 3851540 if you wish and this will save us money, and we're also happy to ring you back if you prefer - that's free from our landline to a landline. Notice we managed to get our lucky number 422 in there so there's no excuse for forgetting the number!

Website

This has not been working hard enough for us. With experience, we've now identified the changes that need to be made and Oliver will be making those changes in the coming few weeks. There's a restructuring, including a new FORDS shop! This will take the form of links to our Friends who produce and sell something with a donation to FORDS - and there's no limit to how many such Partners we have, so anyone who wants to support FORDS can. A new Bulletin Board will keep all updates and information on long-running fundraisers like the Mechanics Championship together in one easy-access place, too.

Merchandise

We're delighted to announce our first Partners - Dave Rennie who can produce anything you like with our 422 Car-Toon to order; Ur-Badge for Keep Calm key rings, mugs, coasters and much more; and Paul Sherliker with the Keep Calm T-shirts. These will all appear in the new website shop, coming soon.

Charity Application

This is quite an adventure, with Charity regulation having been tightened up and all kinds of hoops to jump through. We've enlisted expert help, which doesn't come cheap but once successful will pay for itself very quickly as it will open up many doors for us. There will be a few changes - for one thing an injured driver will now be making a Grant Application rather than a Claim - and part of the website review is to reflect those, but the common-sense approach and friendly service, and of course the level of support, will keep on improving. This will be paid for from funds given for the purpose of covering costs; 100% of funds given or raised for drivers goes to the drivers, and always will.

The not so good news

Unfortunately, we have to report two incidents recently that have saddened us. Firstly, we foiled an attempt to defraud the Fund. We do rely heavily on people's honesty and 'common knowledge' within our racing community - but clearly that doesn't take away the need for vigilance as sadly it seems there is always one bad apple in a barrel.

The second incident concerns items put up for sale on eBay claiming to be for the benefit of FORDS. The money has never been received and the seller has not replied to messages. As this is too easy to do, we will be taking steps to protect ourselves from this as we (and the Charity Commission probably would too) consider this as theft. The seller will be identified publicly, after further messages and a clear warning, and reported to eBay.



Important notice:

Whether it's a one-off item for sale, a regular merchandise item or a fundraising event, **you must please tell us if you are raising money for FORDS before you do anything.** Not only can we help to publicise it but buyers and the public will be able to check our website to verify that it's genuine and we know about it. I really cannot overstate the importance of this.

One of the factors under Charity Commission scrutiny is that the Trustees of FORDS are in control of the money entrusted to them on the drivers' behalf. We cannot be deemed to be in control if we don't know what's happening - this is the most elementary of Good Practice guidelines. As much as we trust Promoters and friends to make sure the money reaches us, the Commission must be able to see the evidence. So the same applies - an email, a phone call or a message is all it takes to protect us all and keep ahead of the con men.

Secretary's comment:

It just keeps getting better! The Fund is really still in its infancy yet in our first full year of operation turnover is already at a quarter of our first stage target, despite a slow start to the year. Promoters, formulae and individuals are getting involved with ideas and helping us to build up the name of FORDS. We're being talked about, too!

It is disappointing to discover that there are people out there prepared to try to use our name to make money for themselves, or even try to steal what we've worked hard to raise to help people keep out of financial trouble when they've been hurt entertaining others through their hobby. But these are just a couple of scumbags among thousands of good, genuine people.

Next year is already looking very promising and I'm looking forward to trips to Ireland in March and Scotland in June, as well as visits to at least 20 tracks in England. Let's aim for a nice 50 grand next year and lots of fun raising it!

Finally I'd like to extend our best wishes to our injured drivers and also to a special friend, Ellie McMahon, who had her tonsils out recently. Ellie is our youngest friend and bucket-shaker at just six years of age. Get well soon Ellie!

All that remains is for me to wish you all a happy Christmas and health, wealth and happy racing for 2013.

Manuela

Secretary
on behalf of the Trustees