

Q CLASS TRIAL

This article provides the historical activity behind the introduction of the Q class trial, what is expected to be gained by its introduction and how the trial will be monitored.

The majority of the information for this article comes from the minutes of the Scrutineering meetings prior to the acceptance vote at the November 2016 EGM. Any discussion or feedback post the acceptance vote will be considered at the trial reviews.

It is not possible to preempt the result of the trial and attempting to do so early in the trial period is likely to only limit the possibilities of what could be achieved if an open view is taken early on.

The object of any trial is to understand or provide evidence for any future changes or new policy decisions. Therefore it needs to be very clear at the outset that in order for the member clubs to make those future decisions then evidence must be captured and recorded by each club that takes advantage of the Q Class trial.

The bottom line here is without the clubs providing evidence the Q class trial fails.

Why Q Class and why a trial?

Over the last few years general feedback from member clubs was indicating that in some areas and types of competition there was a falling membership resulting in the issue of the viability of running a local competition due to the land costs involved.

Some clubs also reported there does appear to be a need to allow vehicles that are not fully compliant to ALRC regulations to be able to enter some club events at certain levels. Clubs are finding that they are turning away entries and many have seen such reduced entries in membership and events that they may no longer be able to exist as an effective club.

To negotiate a way around this some clubs were using the privilege permit option that allows other non ALRC clubs to be invited. Some created subsidiary clubs and some by allowing new members to join to take part at the lower end of the competition ladder but give them the chance to bring their vehicles up to the required standard of technical compliance.

To provide a possible solution some method was required to allow possible new members to compete in their **existing** vehicle that was essentially Land Rover but may not comply 100% with the existing **technical regulations**. (It must be noted that in all cases there must be compliance with the MSA Blue book for every event).

There had been some very considerable work done around the additional classes including some fine detail changes as part of the Competitive Events Consultation document that was eventually rejected by the clubs. However from the work on the consultation and the questions it raised and the feedback received it was clear that the clubs did not have a coherent prospective let alone detailed picture of what was actually required.

Taking all the previous points in hand there was clearly a need for a "real world view". Therefore a proposal was made that by way of a trial a new and effectively open but Land Rover based class be introduced to assess the exact nature of the vehicles involved and their effect on the actual competition and new membership benefits. Acceptance of the trial of the new class for these vehicles was voted in at the November 2016 EGM.

Trial Period

At the March 2016 Scrutineering and Off Road Committee (S&ORC) meeting it was suggested that there be a two year trial period. Therefore the trial will run until the end of December 2018.

Trial Evidence collection

As previously indicated evidence of activity is vital to the successful conclusion of this trial.

On a regular basis clubs should provide to the ALRC Secretary as comprehensive details as possible of the type of vehicle entering under Q Class trial during this period. Particularly the nature of the event including what specific elements precluded the vehicle from entering one of the existing classes. How did the entry of this vehicle affect the running of the event both in terms of complications with regard to eligibility and what benefit did the club gain from this entry. With most mobile phones having built in cameras it should be possible to include an overall picture of the vehicle and the specific variations to existing ALRC classes and technical requirements. Details of vehicles refused entry as not complying with Q Class and or MSA regulations should also be provided.

Clubs should not delay in providing feedback when entries are accepted for the Q Class trial.

Trial Assessment

At each of the ALRC Council and Scrutineering meetings the feedback evidence from the clubs will be reviewed. A summary of the reported evidence will be given at each of the EGMs during the trial period.

Trial Conclusion

It is anticipated the final evaluation of the trial will be concluded at the October 2018 ALRC Council meeting. However, if by the November 2017 Scrutineering meeting, should any positive attributes of the trial relating to development of the existing technical regulations be identified then the expectation is that proposals may be allowed to be put forward for voting at the 2018 AGM. Any additional changes identified at the conclusion of the trial, if accepted will not be valid until 2020.

Trial Limitations

At the National Rally a Q Class vehicle would not be eligible for any ALRC Annual Trophy during the trial period.

For the 2017 National Rally Q Class would not be eligible for entry to any event.

For the 2018 National Rally Q class entry would be at the behest of the host club subject to a positive review during 2017. The Annual trophy exemption would still apply.

It would be down to individual clubs how they award trophies or amalgamate classes at their own events.

There is no compulsion for clubs to take part in this trial. Clubs not wishing to take part should include an SR excluding Q Class from their events.