

JK2014 Day 4 Organiser's Comments

Charles and I first visited the proposed Arena site on a very cold, windy and bleak New Year's Day 2013 and with its remote and limited parking were, to put it mildly, far from convinced that it was suitable for the JK Relays. Mark Saunders, ever the optimist, was very persuasive however pointing out that it had worked for BRC 2007, the weather had been brilliant, well at least for one of the days, and the parking would be fine.

We reluctantly agreed to proceed on the basis of an expected entry of 400 teams but with a definite no no if the expectation was anywhere close to that for JK2013 (535 on the day).

How wrong we were and what a fantastic day it turned out to be. We even coped with an eventual entry of 580 teams, Christine keeping that figure from me until the end as I had been sweating after we topped the 500 mark.

A pity about the storm on Sunday evening but at least we had virtually set everything up by then. Although we had protected some parts of the access track it just couldn't take the heavier food retailer's vehicles and it was agreed that they should remain on the hard standing below the Arena. Although we didn't know it at the time the bowser bringing water for the toilets couldn't access the track either and we had to make emergency arrangements to ferry water up from the Village Hall and another local property.

With the limited lay out options we knew there would be some compromises around the Finish area (the overflow for club tents was due to go behind the marquee although not needed on the day) and so tried our best to provide plenty of spectating options with the planning team providing a similar focus with their courses. It more than paid off on the day judging by the noise and atmosphere created and brilliantly captured by the many photographs on the web.

The lay out including the extended warm up areas all worked even better than planned.

We had to overcome a lot of challenges during the previous 15 months with parking and vehicle management being one of the major issues. Pat Macleod (NGOC) did a brilliant job in helping to secure over 1200 car parking spaces to include a strong Plan B should our main area not fully recover from the record winter rains as well as assisting with other related issues.

I was very lucky to have a group of very experienced team leaders (Pat, Howard Thomas, David Palmer, Peter Foster, Chris Johnson and Tommi Glover) and an on the day deputy in Alan Honey who did a brilliant job in ensuring that everything came together in the Arena including taking on the unenviable job of rescuing the toilets.

Members of BOK and NGOC, as well as friends from other clubs, provided fantastic support on the day (we needed over 130 in total with many offering to double up) as well as with setting up. Members of the "BOK Army" undertook work on preparing the main car park and Arena during the previous week with a small contingent, the 'unsung heroes', subsequently repairing the access track.

It was a pleasure to work with planners Mark and Keith and experience their enthusiasm and commitment as well as with Simon and Charles who provided much needed calming support on occasions. Judging by the many comments received the JK2014 Relays turned out to be a very special event. Many thanks for being part of it.

Dave Urch (BOK)