



Drum Corps United Kingdom **"The Future"**

The new management team of Drum Corps United Kingdom who were elected by their fellow Corps Directors and Corps Representatives at the recent AGM met for the their first full session on Saturday 4th November 2006. The team consists of Chris Jones, Karen Muskett, Rob Swindells and Joe Fitzpatrick. The team were also joined for their discussions by the newly elected Chair of MPA-UK, Alan Thompson.

All members of the new board had gained a degree of feedback from members, alumni and supporters prior to the first full meeting and were able to use this valuable information and time together to discuss many topics and initiatives as a initial step in firstly stabilising the sport of Drum Corps in the UK and secondly starting to put in place plans which will encourage and facilitate an environment whereby Drum Corps and the DC activity can once again become a leading force known for excellence, entertainment and professionalism in the art of marching music.

A new DCUK **and the stabilisation of the Drum Corps Activity**

While looking at the immediate future the board felt that it had a number of issues to address in order to ensure that corps would commit to the DCUK summer circuit in 2007. These fell primarily into following major categories.

- Events that would attract a larger audience than we had become used during recent years.
- A restructure of the competitive class structure, which would facilitate participation by Corps based on standard of performance and or on age of performers within each corps.
- A desire to enable all member Corps to self-select which category or class to participate in based on their own aspirations.
- A commitment to driving down the cost of membership and participation of Drum Corps United Kingdom.
- Judging Systems and Relationships
- The continuance of developing DCUK's relationships with its strategic partners enabling closer working relationships in the future for the good of all.
- A major overhaul of the rules and regulations, which govern our events in an effort to develop a culture and ethic of "can do" as opposed to "can't do",

Events and Season Structure

It was decided for 2007 to run a season that would consist of three summer spectacular competitive shows at which we would endeavour to feature the very best that Drum corps has to offer our fan base as well as facilitate and encourage competition and participation of emerging corps.

As yet dates have not been finalised but it is planned to hold these summer showpiece events during the months of June and July. It is also the plan to run the summer spectaculars with one in the North/North West, one in the South East and one in the South West.

It is also intended that all of the DCUK summer season shows (including Championships) will take place in high quality stadia, which will afford an enjoyable experience for the performers and audience alike with excellent facilities.

The celebration end of season Drum Corps United Kingdom Championships will be held in September 2006 in the Midlands and once again feature the very best that the Drum Corps activity has to offer at their very best.

Class Structure

It is proposed that Drum Corps will be catered for in three different competitive divisions. This will allow corps to self select a class that will work best with the corps' financial and structural resources and their own educational philosophy.

The three competitive classes will be known as The IOC, the NOC and the NJC. The IOC and NOC will be divisional classes based primarily on performance standard with no age restrictions using a self-selection model giving autonomy and freedom of choice to individual member corps.

The NJC. Which is the third divisional class will also be based on performance but this division will have the added benefit of being a class with a capped age profile. The focus of this class will be to allow young

It is envisaged that each divisional class will be judged on a slightly differing scale of achievement and or tolerance of acceptance with IOC shows generally being the most difficult or demanding

International Open Class (The IOC)

This Class is for any Corps style unit of ANY AGE profile wishing to take advantage of a level of competition and adjudication where competition is the primary focus and participation is open to marching units of a corps style who wish to gain feedback from the judging system and adjudicators at an advanced level of achievement.

National Open Class (The NOC)

Open to any Corps style unit of ANY AGE wishing to take advantage of competition in an environment where corps within the division could well be of an emerging nature or corps that are not solely focused on competition and as such rehearsal schedules dictate that they cannot commit the time necessary to compete in the IOC.

National Junior Class (The NJC)

A class designed for emerging or established successful Corps who wish to compete and still match their commitments to their own constitutional or educational requirements This divisional class will be one of a capped age profile enabling corps to be matched in a class together on an upper age limit capped profile.

In addition DCUK will welcome exhibition performances from other Corps Style units wishing to participate during the 2007 summer season. Corps will be welcome from what has traditionally been known as the Cadet, Junior, Open or A Classes. It is DCUK commitment to afford all Corps Style units regardless of age profile or performance standard the opportunity to participate in the sport of Drum Corps.

Cost of Membership

While it is still too early to release details of the full financial obligations that member corps would be subjected to, it was felt that as an underlying principle DCUK would now be committed to a program of Driving Down the Cost of membership and participation moving forward while still delivering a high quality feature set including effective administration and communication along with an undertaking to secure external funding. This coupled with the significant overhead and operational reductions realised under the previous management will set DCUK on a path of renewed financial stability and growth.

The board agreed to start the process of financial planning and budget setting from a point of a zero balance sheet, while this is not necessarily the real position of DCUK as an operating division of MPA-UK it was agreed by all that all of DCUK's activities should be catered for from its own ability to raise the necessary funds needed to operate from within its own resources and in addition create a surplus moving forward to enable not only future development of itself but also a contribution to the stability, viability and success of the MPA-UK charity.

A range of budget proposals and financial models are currently being formatted and discussed. These proposals will be brought back before the board and once agreed will be forward to the prospective membership as soon as possible.

Judging

The Board made a commitment to explore a review of the current DCUK Judging system with its partners both here in the UK and in mainland Europe.

Bearing in mind the work already undertaken in forming closer alliances with DCE, DCN, DCG and DCF and coupled with the realisation that many of our Drum Corps attend events on mainland Europe the board felt it only appropriate to pursue further talks with regards to aligning our current judging system which has not had a major review for many years. Further news and announcements on this will be forthcoming as soon as is possible.

The DCUK board are currently communicating with the Judges and are exploring all potential options with regards to the future strategies and initiatives. It is hoped that this dialogue will continue and that your board will be in a position to report positive news in the near future.

Organisation Cooperation

DCUK will continue to foster and enhance our relationships with our strategic partners on mainland Europe and in the UK. Once again much work has already been done in this area and we are keen in the short to medium term to foster and nurture our relationships with both the British Youth Band Association (BYBA) and Drum Corps Europe (DCE) and its partners. To this end meetings with both these organisations representatives have been arranged during the coming weeks to further explore not only the obvious synergies shared but also in an attempt to work together on issues such as season scheduling, membership profiling, competition alignment in an effort to enable the corps in membership of DCUK to take advantage of opportunities to experience that other organisations maybe able to offer.

Rules and Regulations

The board have committed to a far-reaching review of the rule and regulations of the Drum Corps activity. This review will concentrate its efforts on examining the reason behind why many of the punitive rules we have were introduced and if they are still relevant or indeed required. The board feel that it is indeed the role of the member corps senior management who should be responsible for insuring that fair play and a sense of justice prevail as opposed to the world of DCUK as the bearer of bad news.

It is felt that the approach to running DCUK whereby there were too many barriers in place and a can't do culture had manifested itself over many years needs to change. It is the intention to develop a much more relaxed, open and less restrictive culture to grow and form the basis of a new and inclusive organisation.

DCUK will however like to reaffirm its commitment to uphold the bedrock principles governing issues such as legal, moral, Health and safety and youth development moving forward.

Summary

While the new management team of DCUK understand that there is certainly much work to do and that at this time there is little meat on the bone in terms of finite detail we would commend this report as to our progress thus far and would trust that you understand that the board will deliver more detail as to the immediate future as soon as is practicably possible.

The board plans to meet again within the next few weeks where it is anticipated firm decisions will be reached and agreed.

The one thing that we can promise moving forward is simply that for those Corps who do join our ranks and participate in the New Era DCUK 2007. Drum Corps United Kingdom will deliver a series of events that will cater for all standards of Drum Corps units in superb venues attracting increased audiences with credible judging run to the highest standards.

Drum Corps United Kingdom will also deliver on its commitments to harness and specialise in its efforts to cater for the Drum Corps style organisations and facilitate an environment where Corps need not only commit solely to DCUK but can also participate within the bosom of other marching music organisations events both home and abroad

Further announcements will be forthcoming within the next few weeks with more detailed plans being published in order to enable Drum Corps to start making plans for 2007.

9th November 2006