

The Future of RAYNET

Information for all RAYNET Controllers and
members

This document contains a joint statement by the Network's Committee of Management and the
RSGB Emergency Communications Committee

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Statement from the Committee of Management of The Radio Amateurs' Emergency Network and the RSGB Emergency Communications Committee regarding the future of RAYNET

Long-standing members of both organisations have been through many twists and turns in the RSGB/Network relationship, following the breakaway back in 1992, the formation of the Network the following year and past attempts by both sides to discourage negative factions found on both sides and to promote the idea of a single organisation that the User Services recognise as "RAYNET".

The Agreement, signed by the RSGB and The Radio Amateurs' Emergency Network ("The Network") back in 2012, went some way towards this, recognising the strengths on both sides and setting out a working agreement on the promotion of RAYNET under which both organisations could work. A Joint Working Group (JWG) which includes members from both Network and RSGB has been exploring unification.

The general feeling amongst the RAYNET membership following the consultation last year, is that a single organisation is desirable. The difference this time is that the RSGB via its Emergency Communications Committee approached the Network with the wish to move to one single organisation to represent the interests of emergency communications in the UK.

This approach is a genuine attempt by the RSGB to encourage joint working towards the unification of all RAYNET members into a single organisation. The RSGB has recognised that the structure of The Network is suited to the purpose and has agreed that The Network should be the basis of a unified RAYNET.

The JWG has always felt that the unified RAYNET should have a new name that retains the RAYNET connection. Various names were considered and it was decided that RAYNET-UK was the best available name. The Committee of Management (CoM) of The Network wishes to change the name of the company from The Radio Amateurs' Emergency Network to RAYNET-UK. This name is used below and should be read as the single organisation to which all existing RAYNET members of any affiliation interested in continuing RAYNET activities need to be registered.

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The Network's Articles of Association are undergoing revision and the amendments proposed by CoM, will be put to The Network's membership to accept or reject at a forthcoming EGM (October 2016). The revised Memorandum and Articles will form the governing documents of RAYNET-UK.

Members of The Network will have the opportunity to vote on unification at the AGM in October. The RSGB on the other hand has only to approve the JWG's proposals at Board level. If the Network membership agrees and the RSGB Board approves, then unification to RAYNET-UK will follow.

If the Network membership does not agree or the RSGB's Board does not approve, then the JWG will have to make a choice whether to reformulate their proposals to be put before the Network membership and RSGB Board-again or abandon the idea of unification altogether and continue as now.

Post-unification, RAYNET-UK needs to evolve and continue to be relevant in the 21st century. To do this it needs to encompass a broader range of communication methods suitable for the User Services, as they too undergo change. A new willingness from the membership to investigate and use all forms of communication relevant to User Services and not just 'voice over RF' are needed to reflect this.

Separately from the unification of RAYNET members into a single organisation, the RSGB has asked that RAYNET consider its association with the RSGB and change from that of a simple affiliation to the Society into becoming a Special Interest Group (SIG).

SIGs have full organisational autonomy from the RSGB. They give certain privileges to the organisation than mere affiliation (which The Network currently has) – for example, a direct link into the RSGB Board via a nominated person, a seat on the RSGB's Spectrum Forum, and a consultative role in discussions which may affect emergency communications.

The Agreement between the RSGB and RAYNET-UK has been re-written to reflect SIG status within the National Society. This agreement is ready for signing as soon as the decision to proceed to unification has been approved by both sides.

Proposals for Zonal re-organisation for RAYNET-UK are also anticipated with a view to reducing the size of the management committee, though such re-structuring should for continuity and democratic obligation, be phased in to mesh with existing terms of office of current Zonal Co-ordinators (ZCs).

There now seems to be a willingness from the RSGB Board to also promote RAYNET matters within Radcom and an offer has already been made to re-instate the RAYNET column and include items of interest in GB2RS.