

EMERGING TECHNOLOGY COORDINATION COMMITTEE (ETCC) REPORT FOR SPECTRUM FORUM NOVEMBER 2010

My report this year reflects the extensive delays with frequency clearances by the Primary Users of our shared bands. It should be noted that we have at least two Primary Users who impact on clearances in just about every secondary band. In 23cms the main user affecting us is the CAA with the MOD not only being involved in 23cms but almost everywhere else.

From around April significant delays have been experienced with 70cms clearances ceasing to be processed despite many escalation requests. There was one notable exception when a local site change using an existing frequency was approved in a very short time indeed.

We can understand that there may be more pressing priorities within the MOD than Amateur Radio but it appears that the Amateur Service is not alone in experiencing a lack of response. The situation was fully discussed at a recent RSGB/Ofcom meeting and is being followed up by Ofcom.

It was also agreed at this meeting that the ETCC would carry out a full review and update on the 'Fylingdales' noise floor database and this was completed and forwarded to the MOD in September following a significant amount of work by Steve G8SFR and Colin G3PSM.. The result of this study indicates that we are still well below the agreed threshold figure and as a result of this we have been promised some movement on 70cms when 'time permits' but as yet have seen no further progress.

As in previous reports 23cms continues as an area of concern where the CAA continues to object to virtually all proposals made. We are of the opinion that our use of these frequencies is not fully understood by the authorities and steps are being taken to address this by the preparation of a paper describing typical systems that are deployed in the band including modes of operation, typical power levels and antenna systems. We are in the process of refining this paper and will be sharing the information with the PU in the near future.

The Microwave Manager will no doubt refer in his report to the production of a revised 23cm bandplan. This revised plan should assist in identifying those areas of spectrum which are most likely to cause problems to PU systems thus steering users to choose frequencies which have a much greater chance of success. This may mean some changes in the future of the frequencies used by existing repeaters.

I am afraid the situation is even worse in the higher order bands (13 and 9cms), where there has not even been an acknowledgment of requests for clearance sent via Ofcom. This has been referred to the RSGB Board for further escalation.

We were very sorry to hear a short time ago that Rod Wilkinson had effectively retired from his post in the Ofcom Licensing Centre. Rod was going to retire at the end of this year but due to ill health has gone now. We wish him well and hope that he experiences better health in his retirement; we most certainly owe him a debt of gratitude for the excellent service he has given to the entire Amateur community.

Rod's retirement obviously creates concerns on resourcing within the OLC as he was the person who was always referred to for advice. I have been happy to deal with repeater licensing queries referred to me by Ofcom and will continue to support this as required. It is clear however that they do need someone with current Amateur knowledge on a permanent basis and we wait to see how this is addressed.

John McCullagh GI4BWM

**Chairman ETCC
November 2010**