

**Radio Society of Great Britain  
Minutes of the Spectrum Forum Meeting  
Saturday 20<sup>th</sup> November 2010**

**Present**

Peter Barville, G3XJS (G-QRP), Peter Blakeborough, G3PYB (BATC), Ian Brothwell, G4EAN (BARTG), David Butler (RSGB VHF Manager), Cathy Clark, G1GQJ (RAEN), David Dix, G8LZE (UKSMG), Chris Duckling, G3SVL (CDXC), John Gould, G3WKL (Chair & RSGB Board – Spectrum & HF Manager), Martin Harrison, G3UGF (PSC), Trevor Hawkins, M5AKA (AMSAT-UK), Sam Jewell, G4DDK (UKuG), Peter Kirby, G0TWW, (General Manager, RSGB), John McCullagh, G14BWM (ETCC), Charlie Morrison, G14FUE (RSGB Board – Public Service), Murray Niman, G6JYB (RSGB Microwave Manager), John Pink, G8MM (EMCC), Ed Taylor, GW3SQX (CC), Ian Underwood, M0YMK, (VMARS), Dave Wilson, M0OBW (RSGB President).

**1. Appointment of meeting secretary**

Murray Niman and David Butler agreed to take notes. It was also agreed that we would approve the minutes by e-mail shortly after they were circulated for comment.

**2. Apologies**

Leslie Butterfields, G0CIB, Peter Chadwick, G3RZP, Roger Cook, G3LDI, Dave Lawley, G4BUO, Iain Philipps, G0RDI, Graham Shirville, G3VZV, Colin Thomas, G3PSM.

**3. Introductions**

The Chairman reminded the meeting that the Spectrum Forum was created in 2004 to replace some of the committees and involve special interest groups to facilitate better decision making. It was pointed out that a number of leaflets existed on the work of the Forum; members were free to take some back for their clubs, etc.

**4. Minutes of previous meeting**

Approved, note was taken to correct Peter Kirby's call sign.

Actions arising:

1. **RSGB to continue to put pressure on IARU Region 1 re deliberate QRM (DQRM):** HF Manager had put forward proposals for an analysis approach at the Region 1 Interim Conference in February 2010 and had followed that up with a CDXC Workshop and discussions with DX Clubs at Friedrichshafen. Action completed.
2. **PSC website sub-domain needs to be linked to main website:** PSC web pages due to move shortly to the main RSGB domain – Action completed

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3. **John Gould to be included as a member of the RSGB Beacon Policy Group:**  
Action Completed.
4. **Need to check that satellites are recorded on ITU records:** IARU has overhauled its online information and updated the forms lodged with ITU. Action completed.
5. **Chairman to invite BARTG to the Forum meeting.** Action completed.

## 5. Spectrum Reports

### 5.1 HF

Report accepted.

In addition to his report the HF Manager highlighted the DQRM Workshop that was undertaken with CDXC. He said that DQRM continues to be a priority for the Society but that it is difficult to come up with an enforcement approach that might be acceptable to other Region 1 societies. It was noted that the Society supports the DX Code of Conduct and that a link for it had been put on the RSGB Home page. He commented that the UK has its own share of poor operators and that the RSGB Regional Team was considering how improving mentoring in local clubs could be developed to improve matters. UKSMG said that it was supporting the DX Code of Conduct.

40m band plan: Concern over PSK31 and phone operators not moving to the new band plan. It was noted that some DRM SSTV nets were not centring the operation on the Region 1 Image CoA (7165 kHz). BARTG questioning whether 40m should be re-planned – they would like to see narrow-band datamodes between 7070 – 7100 kHz and wide-band datamodes above 7100 kHz. HF Manager was cautious about re-opening the 40m band plan discussion within Region 1. If national societies took the same views as in 2008 General Conference we could end up with a worse situation for all the different mode categories. As some Region 1 countries had still to put in place the additional 100 kHz agreed at WRC-07 and because of the need to allow Regions 2 & 3 to re-harmonise it was agreed not to make fresh proposals at next year's Region 1 General Conference. There was a general feeling that the RSGB should do more to encourage conformity and good operating practice on the 40m plan. It was agreed that the Chairman should write a leader for the February RadCom, which is the issue that will carry the full print of the Band Plan. **Action: John Gould to draft leader for February RadCom**

WRC-12: This was only briefly discussed as the detail in the HF Manager's Report and the report from Colin Thomas, G3PSM was self-explanatory. It was mentioned that Colin wasn't at the forum meeting as he had only just returned from 10 days away at a WRC12 preparatory meeting in Geneva as a part of Ofcom's delegation.

### 5.2 VHF/UHF

Report accepted.

Commenting upon the recent failure of a Special Research Permit (SRP) with Ofcom, the VHF Manager commented that he would prefer that SRPs (which are a means of gaining a Notice of Variation to the licence) be sent to him prior to being sent to Ofcom. That way some of the more obvious pitfalls can be avoided. It was agreed that the RSGB ought to review its SRP advice and handling process. **Action: John Gould to organise a review of the RSGB's SRP handling process.**

The comments in the VHF Manager's report concerning Aeronautic Mobile were discussed. This has relevance to the recent interest in balloon and paper aircraft telemetry. It was noted that Aeronautical Mobile was very restricted in the UK. It was agreed that this is an issue that ought to be taken up with CAA. **Action: Peter Kirby & Murray Niman to arrange a meeting with CAA for them and David Butler to progress this issue (along with a 23cm issue, see below)**

VHF Awards: Mention was made that some annual VHF awards may have not been made since the demise of the VHF Committee. It was thought that these could be included as part of the awards normally presented at the AGM. **Action: Peter Kirby to discuss with Alison Leigh (HQ)**

6m Band Planning: It was broadly agreed how 6m beacons & EME could be included in a re-planning of the band. There was an obvious need to coordinate DX windows and the Contest Committee commented that it was willing to help by specifying different segments to help open spread operations. **Action: VHF Manager to involve UKSMG, PSC, CDXC, Contest Committee, BARTG, GQRP and AMSAT UK in forming a detailed 6m re-planning paper for the RSGB to submit to the Region 1 General Conference.**

The sustainability and modernisation of 70cm beacons was discussed. The topic had also been presented at the recent RSGB Convention. It was agreed that the minutes should highlight the need for VHF/UHF beacons to be more sustainable.

### 5.3 Microwaves

Report accepted.

23cm re-planning was discussed. This follows from the need to respond to Primary User (PU) concerns. The Microwave Manager had been in contact with CAA and aims to have a re-plan done by mid-December that will allow it to be included in the annual publication of Band Plans in RadCom that will be delayed until the February issue. *[note: since the meeting it has become clear that this deadline was not going to be achieved – planning will continue and published separately in RadCom once completed.]*

**Actions: Microwave Manager to liaise with ETCC, BATC, UKuG, AMSAT-UK on the 23cm re-planning.**

Referring to other issues that were also impacting microwaves: 70cm Clearances, etc, had been affected by MoD resource and organisation changes. MoD had held work on clearances pending a re-supply of 70cm noise-floor data for Fylingdales; ETCC passed this

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data in September and this had recently lifted the MoD embargo on new clearances. MoD clearances continue to be a challenge in secondary bands, affecting 1.3-10GHz.

Ofcom 2012 Olympic preparations: Discussions ongoing on spectrum and assistance roles – RAYNET, compliance testing / tag checks, etc.

Beacon clearances: Backlog was similar to repeater clearances, due to PU issues.

## 6. Committee Reports

### 6.1 Electromagnetic Compatibility Committee

Report accepted.

In respect of PLA/PLT John Pink said that the realistic view was that we could not expect “to put the genie back into the bottle”; further he commented that there will need to be a compromise on new standards including notching. The threat is that without progress something worse might occur, or be imposed by others like the EU.

Still not enough complaint cases being directly reported to Ofcom. He commented that Ofcom’s complaint process was far from perfect since their statistics only record those cases that they investigate. The new EMCC website and its online EMC problem reporting facility was highlighted – it was stressed that all UK amateurs should use it to report problems to the EMCC but also that they should check that they can receive on the Broadcast bands and report the problem to Ofcom if they cannot.

New threats are emerging in discussions ongoing in CENELEC – including smart-metering/ grids in the 2-4MHz band (4 x 500 kHz bands from France). John Pink was also concerned about the new gigabit PLAs that affect VHF and could probably bring in a VHF notching standard.

### 6.2 Emerging Technology Coordination Committee

Report accepted.

John McCullagh commented that the worst problems were clearances with MoD and CAA on our secondary bands – delays with MoD is seen as more of a resource issue. The retirement of Rod Wilkinson, Ofcom, will probably make things more difficult as it appears that no replacement is being made.

### 6.3 Contest Committee

Report accepted.

Ed Taylor commented that the main business is the organisation and management of UK contests. It is good news that the number of entrants is increasing. The Contest Committee is conscious of good contest management, i.e. keeping operation where possible to within “contest preferred segments”. Main complaints are in respect of non-UK contests.

The Committee is concerned that some operators stray into the 1800-1810 kHz segment that is not available to UK stations. The Committee uses spectrum recordings to review

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such frequency infringements as well as other forms of contest 'policing'. Action is taken on those who flout contest rules and/or their licence terms.

Ed Taylor reported that the RSGB 21/28 MHz contest is due to be re-instated after feedback on its demise.

### 6.4 Propagation Studies Committee

Report Accepted.

## 7. Group Reports

### 7.1 AMSAT-UK

Report noted

Trevor Hawkins reported that existing Government satellite licensing requirements result in additional costs of £50-60k for a CubeSat. He reported that AMSAT-UK was discussing this situation with the relevant Minister of State. In the meantime one way around this problem would be for UK CubeSats to be licensed via another country.

The UK Space agency has said their first satellite, UKube-1, will carry a set of AMSAT-UK's "FUNcube" boards.

### 7.2 BARTG

Ian Brothwell raised concern over 10 MHz phone activities that were affecting their digimode segment. Chairman stated that IARU Region 1 was aware but that it was difficult to enforce; he added that it was important to discourage this activity as amateurs only have secondary status.

### 7.3 BATC

Report noted.

Peter Blakeborough mentioned the growth of DATV on 70cm and that a paper needs to be produced to coordinate this activity with AMSAT-UK in the 437 MHz region.

**Action: Peter Blakeborough and Trevor Hawkins to consider coordinating DATV & Satellite activity in the 437 MHz area.**

Peter Blakeborough also emphasised the need to rethink 13cm situation due to interference from Wi-Fi systems at 2.4 GHz. **Action: Murray Niman & Peter Blakeborough to consider the way forward for ATV on 13cm**

### 7.4 CDXC

Report noted.

Chris Duckling commented that addressing the DQRM problem was still their highest priority spectrum management issue. He commented that the Reverse Beacon System (created by collation of CW Skimmer reports) was becoming a valuable HF operating tool,

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perhaps more so than the DX Cluster. He suggested that it could change operating concepts as well as beacon system design.

### 7.5 FOC

The chairman noted that FOC were not represented but commented that the clubs main concerns were DQRM and the PLA/PLT EMC issues. It was noted the clubs support for the DX Code of Conduct and it was suggested that the work undertaken by Bob Whelan, G3PJT should be recorded.

### 7.6 G-QRP

Report noted.

Peter Barville asked Ed Taylor to consider matching contest segments better to the expected participation level. He also requested that weekday contest respect the 80m QRP CoA.

Ed Taylor (Contest Committee) mentioned that RSGB contests are managed in terms of the frequencies used. The Chairman reminded the meeting of the RSGB's lead in strengthening Region 1's "Contesting Guidelines"<sup>1</sup> in terms of contest frequency management.

### 7.7 UKuG

Report noted.

Sam Jewell highlighted the prestigious International EME2012 Conference that is being held to the UK (Cambridge) with RSGB support in August 2012.

He also reported that the UKuG has a comprehensive beacon programme and has had success with introducing RDDS for frequency locking existing beacons.

Finally he reported that the first 78GHz EME contact was expected soon!

### 7.8 UKSMG

Report noted.

The re-planning of the 6m band was covered in item 5.2 above.

### 7.9 RAYNET

Report noted.

The main concern was that RAYNET's 70cm operations on the South Coast of England can be severely disrupted by interference from French amateurs.

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<sup>1</sup> IARU Region 1 HF Manager's Handbook,  
see [http://www.iaru-r1.org/index.php?option=com\\_remository&Itemid=173&func=startdown&id=17](http://www.iaru-r1.org/index.php?option=com_remository&Itemid=173&func=startdown&id=17)

### 7.10 VMARS

Report noted

Ian Underwood spoke to VMARS' need for AM to be allocated to specific parts of the HF amateur bands, including 5 MHz. The Chairman commented that AM on the 5 MHz channels currently was not possible because of the channel widths. He reminded that the Band Plan does note that AM is a permitted modulation where "All modes" sections of the band exist. He said that it was unlikely that Region 1 would agree to a 6 kHz wide necessary bandwidth sector below 29 MHz, and, given the philosophy behind the band plan since 2005, the RSGB would not press for further Centre of Activities (CoA), irrespective of the type of modulation. The Chairman said that he was not prepared to put forward proposals for this at the next General Conference, but would continue to support AM with Ofcom and with IARU.

With reference to VMARS request that 80m be extended to 4MHz the Chairman commented that 80m extension does not appear in the IARU Spectrum Requirements policy<sup>2</sup>. In terms of VMARS request for a 150 kHz band near to 5 MHz the Chairman reminded the meeting that this is included in the IARU's Spectrum Requirement policy. He added that this was unlikely to be adopted in the near-term as an agenda item for a future World Radiocommunication Conference following difficulties during WRC-07 over the 4 – 10 MHz Review agenda item.

It was suggested that VMARS wrote an article for RadCom to inform members of the interesting work that their members undertake.

## 8. Papers for IARU Region 1 General Conference 2011

It was agreed that at this early stage the ideas for papers would not be put into the public domain as it could prejudice the RSGB negotiating position at the conference.

The proposed drafts of potential HF papers were taken without any significant discussion or disagreement. CDXC urged that something be put forward to address the DQRM problem relating to HF DXing. The Chairman asked for ideas in this area.

It was agreed that drafts for VHF/UHF and Microwave papers would be circulated on the Spectrum reflector during December for comment. The chairman reminded that the RSGB IARU Committee would review the papers in early January and pass its recommendations to the Board for their approval at the January Board meeting. *[Note: subsequent to the meeting it has been agreed that for personal reasons the VHF Manager will not be passing drafts of VHF/UHF papers for comment until early March and that the drafts will be offered for approval at the March Board meeting]*

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<sup>2</sup>

See <http://www.iaru.org/ac-09spec.pdf>

## 9. Spectrum Strategy

The chairman introduced this topic saying that whilst over the years the RSGB strategy on spectrum management had been very successful, it was very much in the minds of one or two people. He felt that both the requirements and the means of achieving these goals needed to be written down. As in most strategic documents some detail of the strategic plan would be confidential to the spectrum managers. He also commented that we would purposely not aim to go too far with strategy development at this stage as it would likely be influenced by the RSGB Amateur Radio Survey that was due to deliver mid-2011.

The Forum discussed the early draft Strategy document and some of the key spectrum requirements were amended.

## 10. A.O.B.

None

## 11. Date of Next Meeting.

It was agreed that the provisional date and time for next year's Forum meeting would be at the same venue on **Saturday 5<sup>th</sup> November 2011, starting at 11am**. The chairman thanked everyone for their help in keeping the meeting to its agenda and for being able to finish on time. He said that we would again aim to finish next year's meeting by 3:30pm.