

# Radio Society of Great Britain

## Minutes of the Spectrum Forum Meeting

### Saturday 5<sup>th</sup> November 2011

#### Present

John Gould, G3WKL (Chair & RSGB Board – Spectrum & Radio Sport), Ian Brothwell, G4EAN (BARTG), Cathy Clark, G1GQJ (RAYNET), David Dix, G8LZE (UKSMG), Chris Duckling, G3SVL (CDXC), Trevor Hawkins, M5AKA (AMSAT-UK & G-QRP), John McCullagh, G14BWM (ETCC), Steve Nichols, G0KYA (PSC), Bob Whelan, G3PJT (FOC), Murray Niman, G6JYB (Microwave Manager), Graham Shirville, G3VZV (BATC), Ed Taylor, GW3SQX (CC), Ian Underwood, M0YMK, (VMARS), John Worsnop, G4BAO (UKuG).

#### 1. Appointment of meeting secretary

Murray Niman and John Gould agreed to take notes. It was also agreed that we would approve the minutes by e-mail shortly after they were circulated for comment. A pack of reports and papers had been circulated prior to the meeting via the Forum reflector.

#### 2. Apologies

Don Beattie, G3BJ (EMCC), David Butler, G4ASR (VHF Manager), Peter Barville, G3XJS (G-QRP), Peter Chadwick, G3RZP, Ian Greenshields, G4FSU (HF Manager), Charlie Morrison, G14FUE (Board – Public Service), Colin Thomas, G3PSM, Dave Wilson, M0OBW (President), Sam Jewell G4DDK (UKuG)

#### 3. Introductions

The Chairman welcomed Bob Whelan, John Worsnop and Steve Nicols to the Forum. Everyone introduced themselves.

#### 4. Actions Arising (from the 2010 minutes)

**5.1 HF: 40m Band Plan:** John Gould to draft leader for February RadCom. **Done**

##### 5.2 VHF:

- i) **SRPs:** John Gould to organise a review of the RSGB's SRP handling process. **Done**
- ii) **Aeronautical Mobile:** 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). **Done**
- iii) **VHF Awards:** Peter Kirby to discuss with Alison Leigh (HQ). **Action cleared**

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- iv) **6m Band Plan:** 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. **Done**

### 5.3 Microwaves:

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

### 7.3 ATV

- i) **70cm:** Peter Blakeborough and Trevor Hawkins to consider coordinating DATV & Satellite activity in the 437 MHz area. **Done – 437 MHz is the best centre for DATV**
- ii) **13cm:** Murray Niman & Peter Blakeborough to consider the way forward for ATV. **Done**

## 5. Spectrum Reports

### 5.1 HF

Report accepted.

Graham Shirville queried the actual progress on PLT, as, whilst the report implied progress, the situation in many locations seemed to be getting worse.

Trevor Hawkins commented on the 40m discussion at the recent Region-1 General Conference. Reported that G-QRP was disappointed at the loss of the CW Contest Preferred Segment on 40m, but added that G-QRP does not want its 7030 kHz Centre of Activity moved. Ed Taylor commented that the Contest Committee would continue to include a reference to avoid 7030 kHz in RSGB contest rules.

In respect of poor adherence by data-mode users to the 40m band plan the Chair explained that there was a pan-Region 1 plan to publicise annually the Band Plan by national societies. The RSGB traditionally does this in the February RadCom. The Chair explained that it is not Region 1 policy to include much by way of usage information in the Band Plans; it was thought helpful to publish suitable centres of activity for RTTY and PSK with the narrative that would accompany the publishing of the Band Plan in RadCom. (Subsequent to the meeting the Chair proposed to exceptionally include a note on the 40m band plan to make this guidance more accessible. The note might read "Note: RSGB recommends that the popular data modes PSK and RTTY are centred on xxx and yyy kHz respectively"). **Action Ian Greenshields, with input from Ian Brothwell**

The Chair commented that since the HF Report had been issued, CEPT had approved the European Common Proposal (ECP) for the 500 kHz agenda item for WRC-12. The ECP proposed a band between 472 and 480 kHz, with a max eirp of 5 W. The original proposal had been developed by the RSGB and presented by the UK delegation.

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The Chair offered Peter Chadwick's comments concerning statements regarding PLT and ISM. The fact is that PLT is not an ITU Service and thus cannot have an 'allocation' under the Radio Regulations. It also currently does not have 'designated frequencies' under ITU rules, hence other radio services can complain if interference is caused. Likewise, ISM is not a radio service or 'allocation', though where its use is 'designated'; within those frequency ranges other services must accept interference from ISM.

### 5.2 VHF

No separate report was issued. Significant issues covered elsewhere on the agenda.

### 5.3 Microwave

Report accepted.

Murray Niman commented that the time had come to introduce the major 23cm changes to help unlock parts of the band and emphasised the pressures on the 2.3 and 3.4GHz bands in particular. Pressures for 'spectrum release' were being driven by the EU and UK Gov (eg such as DCMS) rather than Ofcom. He also referred to the ongoing delays regarding NoVs for propagation beacons.

As a coordinator for Olympics work, he referred to the update given at the Convention regarding 70cms and the current wait for more detail from Ofcom (who in turn were still seeking information from broadcasters etc)

NoV Delays: At this point a number of members of the Forum expressed broader concern over the lack of repeater and beacon NoVs. It was explained that the RSGB had pressed the matter at every opportunity; the issue is complex as it involves both Ofcom and various Primary Users. Issues were arising from loss of resource and conflicting demands from non-Amateur services, such as the demands from the London Olympics. John Worsnop said that he would be proposing to his committee the suspension of new beacon funding until some movement is realised on requests. **Action: Murray Niman and John McCullagh to continue pressure and support to Ofcom and the Primary Users where needed.**

## 6. Committee Reports

### 6.1 Electromagnetic Compatibility Committee

Report accepted.

The PLT concern that Graham Shirville raised under 5.1 was discussed further. UKSMG also expressed concern regarding 30-80MHz. It was noted that examples of PLA interference were available on the RSGB EMCC website, and that people should be encouraged to report instances of suspected PLA interference to Ofcom. There was also a web-form to inform EMCC on their website. Steve Nicols reported that whilst Ofcom cleared a PLA device near to his home, residual and weaker ones were then found that were not tackled by Ofcom. There was a brief discussion as to whether PLA notching included 5 MHz and

the VHF bands. **Action: John Gould & Peter Chadwick to confirm whether 5MHz and the VHF bands are included in the PLA Notching.** Subsequent to the meeting Peter Chadwick confirmed that 5 MHz is not proposed to be notched, but that it is proposed for 50, 70, 75 (ILS marker beacon) 144 - 148, 220 - 225 and 430 to 450 MHz in the ITU report and its extension.

### 6.2 Emerging Technology Coordination Committee

Report accepted.

John McCullagh reported that there had been some movement on 2m NoV requests, but nothing on 70cm (except for a recent short distance site move). He and Murray Niman had recently submitted an updated backlog list to Ofcom. It was noted that there was also a complete absence of any clearances of ATV repeaters on 23 and 13cms.

John Worsnop mentioned the availability of a 70 cm wide-band data modem, based upon WLAN OFDM signalling. John McCullagh mentioned that ETCC was aware and monitoring the situation.

### 6.3 Contest Committee

Report accepted.

Ed Taylor highlighted the work that the Contest Committee was doing in managing spectrum usage for RSGB contests. He also alerted the Forum to the interest in short duration mid-week contests, which was bringing new operators into contesting. Changes in arising from the 6m band plan would need to be looked at by the CC and UKSMG

Ed explained that a new, publication – *RSGB Contest Review* – had results and other contest related information. A copy could be obtained by contacting RSGB HQ and is also listed on the RSGB Shop website – and it is free to RSGB members.

Finally, Ed commented upon the recent transmit power privilege that COMREG allowed Irish contesters. He said that the Contest Committee would be discussing their position during their meeting on 13<sup>th</sup> November. The Chair outlined his work to study the RF Safety and RFI issues in consultation with EMCC and PAC for a possible similar request to Ofcom; he added that the technical aspects were not yet complete. Before any decision to proceed it was likely that there would need to be a consultation with RSGB members.

### 6.4 Propagation Studies Committee

Report Accepted.

Steve Nicols commented about concern over 10m band intrusions. The Chair commented that recordings had been compiled and it was understood that Ofcom would be contacting the appropriate administration to complain.

He also expressed concern over interference to the 20 m NCDXF beacon chain.

## 7. Group Reports

### 7.1 AMSAT-UK

Report noted

Trevor Hawkins gave a vote of thanks to the RSGB for their work with Ofcom on spectrum planning for the Olympics regarding the more sensitive parts of 435-438MHz

There was some discussion over potential interest in 6m by AMSAT; There is no ITU allocation but short-term it was suggested that there would be no restrictions to putting a receiver in orbit for propagation research, which could assess reception of 6m beacons.

### 7.2 BARTG

Report noted

The meeting discussed BARTG's concern over lack of harmonisation of 40 m with other regions. It was stated that Region-3 holds their General Conference in 2012 and Region 2 in 2013. It was agreed that the need to get better alignment between the regions should be escalated to the Region-1 EC and Regional newsletters. **Action Ian Greenshields to contact IARU Region 1 with a view to improving harmonisation of other Regions to the Region 1 40m Band Plan.**

### 7.3 BATC

Report noted.

Graham Shirville highlighted the recent DigiLite innovation, a new low-cost route to DATV.

### 7.4 CDXC

Report noted.

Chris Duckling highlighted the concerns over DQRM spectrum abuse and PLT, and the desire for some HF bands to be expanded.

### 7.5 FOC

Report Noted.

In response to FOC's concern over the apparent need to limit CW contests to 70 kHz, which they saw as impractical, the Chair offered that from his experience Region 1 developed their contesting guidelines for the benefit of medium and small contests. It was generally accepted that IARU could not constrain the few really large contests each year. The inference about the 70 kHz requirement was probably unintended since CW is allowable in all the band-width segments as it is generally below 200 Hz in necessary bandwidth; during major contests it is generally accepted that mode boundaries flex somewhat.

The meeting was impressed with the latest findings of the group developing the DX Code of Conduct. Bob Whelan was appreciative of the RSGB's success in getting Region 1 to

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endorse the code. The Chair took an action to seek approval for FOC to run the recent article on DQRM by G4FSU. **Action John Gould to seek approvals for FOC to re-publish Ian Greenshields' DQRM article** (Approved, subsequent to the meeting)

### **7.6 G-QRP**

Report noted.

The issue of the 7030 kHz had been covered and noted from item 5.1

### **7.7 UKuG**

Report noted.

John Worsnop highlighted that UKuG had not lost any members following their move from print to electronic for their group's Scatterpoint newsletter. He also highlighted the increasing interest in light-wave transmission, and commented that the innovative target of 76 GHz EME was proving illusive. UKuG are finding increased activity on 13cm, and stressed the need for the RSGB to be particularly vigilant over the future of this band.

### **7.8 UKSMG**

Report noted.

David Dix said that overall the group were pleased with all the action on the 6m Band Plan, though some concerns remain. He said the challenge was now the need to get everyone to conform once it was in place.

Ian Underwood commented that as VMARS members used ex-military equipment which used 25 rather than 10 kHz channel spacing, others may note some out-of-channel operation occasionally. He commented that this shouldn't be too severe as generally the output power of their equipment was low. (Clarification given - see band plan discussions)

### **7.9 RAYNET**

Report noted.

Cathy Clark commented that RAYNET was concerned that frequency planning for the Olympics wasn't further progressed at this stage. However RAYNET was roughly in the same position as some other User Services. Cathy also reported on an ongoing issue of not being allowed to communicate with light aircraft, whilst they were airborne.

Cathy replied on a query as to 6 m usage, saying that RAYNET make extensive use of 4 m, 6 m and 70 cm. RAYNET were thanked for input regarding realignments to the 6m band plan

### **7.10 VMARS**

Report noted

In response to the point in the VMARS report concerning due recognition of the use of Amplitude Modulation (AM), the Chair pointed out that there are Notes for each band on the RSGB Band Plan that clarify AM usage. He agreed that this note was not very visible on

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the Region 1 Band Plan. It was agreed to highlight the AM usage in the narrative supporting the annual publication of the RSGB Band Plan. **Action Ian Greenshields to highlight AM usage note in the February Band Plan publication**

### 8. IARU Region 1 General Conference 2011 Band Plan Recommendations

The Band Plan changes from the recent Sun City Region 1 General Conference were individually taken and each was detailed as to how and when the change would be implemented. Particular attention was focussed on changes to 40m, 10m, 6m, 4m, 2m and 23cms. The discussion took account of the two input papers (one by G6JYB on Conference follow-up and soundings; and one by ETCC specifically on 2m repeater channels) as well as an updated draft band plan spreadsheet for the impending changes. Some details were the topic of ongoing discussions, with the timeline aimed at being ready for publication in January 2012 - the February edition of RadCom.

Subsequent to the meeting it was agreed by Cathy Clark and Charlie Morrison that the entries that referred to RAYNET usage in the RSGB Band Plan could be designated "Used by Emergency Communications and Communications and Community Events".

#### Post Meeting Band Plan Notes:-

#### Ongoing topics include:-

- 40m: Data modes migration
- 6m: Clarifications given on 25kHz alignments in the band plan (eg for VMARS, RAYNET) and further liaison to complete the 50MHz DX & Beacon areas.
- 4m: Additional sounding by G4ASR on 70MHz.org regarding meteor scatter frequency change – may use footnotes to reflect national variation in allocations
- 70cm & 23cm: Discussion on new DATV simplex usage and sharing
- Activity in hand with respect to the up-issue of the IARU-R1 VHF Handbook which is the master reference for band plans and was not available prior to the Forum meeting

### 9. Spectrum Strategy

The draft Spectrum Strategy paper, updated from 2010, was discussed in some detail. Account was taken of the future spectrum proposals from the papers submitted by CDXC and Peter Chadwick.

It was decided that the document should be split. The main part, which would be put on the web for members to download would deal with the main strategy issues, but that the more sensitive details concerning "Who" or "How" would be held back as it contains personal information as well as our negotiating positions. **Action John Gould to update the strategy and publish as agreed.**

**10. A.O.B.**

Murray Niman gave early warning of the proposed statements on Spectrum Release, expected later in the month by the Government.

**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 3<sup>rd</sup> November 2012, starting at 11am.**

The chairman thanked everyone for their help in keeping the meeting to its agenda and for being able to finish slightly early. He said that we would again aim to finish next year's meeting by 3:30pm.