

MINUTES OF THE RSGB SPECTRUM FORUM MEETING HELD AT LAMBDA HOUSE ON SATURDAY 9 JULY 2005.

Present

Colin Thomas	G3PSM	RSGB Spectrum Director/Chairman
John Butcher	G3LNS	Chiltern DX Club (CDXC)
Cathy Clarke	G1GQJ	RAEN 'Network'
George Eddowes	G3NOH	First Class Operators Club (FOC)
Mike Dixon	G3PFR	RSGB Microwave Manager
Paul Gaskell	G4MWO	RSGB RCVS National Coordinator
John Gould	G3WKL	Acting RSGB HF Manager
Trevor Hawkins	M5AKA	AMSAT-UK
Peter Kirby	G0TWW	RSGB General Manager/Minutes Secretary
Murray Niman	G6JYB	UK Microwave Group (UkuG)
Graham Shirville	G3VZV	British Amateur Television Club (BATC)

Item 1.00 APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from G3RZP, G3USF, G3XJS, G3ZYY, G4ASR, G4BUO, GI4BWM and G0RDI

Item 2.00

Introductions

Item 3.00 APPOINTMENT OF MEETING SECRETARY

Peter Kirby agreed to take the minutes

Item 4.00 SPECTRUM REPORTS

HF Report

John Gould reported that there was a gradual take up of Countries coming on to the 7MHz extension. That IARU conference papers had been prepared and work was progressing on the new IARU HF Bandplan which will be produced at the Davos conference.

Arrangements for HFC 2005 are well in hand.

MF

There is active support for an amateur allocation in the region of 500kHz with Australia and New Zealand pursuing an allocation. The German administration has allocated a research licence on 440 kHz with the call DI2HE.

In the UK we have registered our interest with Ofcom and our submission has been passed to the Maritime and Coastguard Agency (MCA) for comment. If granted this would be run along the same lines as the 5MHz experiment.

LF Report

136kHz is suffering major QRM from the LORAN Navigational System transmitting at 100kHz. This is coming from Rugby. It would appear from early investigations that this system is being enhanced and supported by a number of countries including Holland, Germany and France. The RSGB is to raise the matter with Ofcom and with Trinity House who are the UK sponsors of the system.

VHF/UHF Report

No report was received

Microwave Report

Mike Dixon reported that the UK amateur Microwave scene remains fluid; however, there are concerns over the long term future. The UKuG are very active in all areas, and in general there is a lot more interest in Microwave operation amongst UK amateurs.

1.3 GHz Major concern in this band is the threat from the Galileo GPS system.

2.3/2.4 GHz No known problems from wireless activities although if the power limits are raised on SRDs due to commercial pressures this would cause considerable problems for the Amateur Satellite service in the future.

3.4 – 10 GHz Major threat to these bands is the introduction of UWB devices.

24 GHz No change in this band. Still subject to UWB vehicle SRR until 2020 (estimate) despite strong technical objections from the Amateur services, the Radio Astronomy service and other users.

The 77 – 81 GHz band will be phased in for UWB Vehicle SRR, as 24 GHz is phased out. The RSGB has responded to the Ofcom 'consultation' at 76 GHz with the result that Ofcom have publicly stated that the 75.5 – 76GHz band will remain available to the Amateur Service (at least in the UK) after 2006 and it should be possible to regain Amateur Primary status in this segment.

Committee Reports

Data Communications Committee

Report was enroute and had not arrived at the time of the meeting. This was received during the course of the meeting.

Repeater Management Committee

The Repeater Management Committee was now under the chairmanship of John McCullagh GI4BWM. The first meeting under the new chairman will be held in Birmingham next weekend.

The main areas of concern at the present time are the inability to provide a good service due to the delays in getting clearances from Ofcom. The situation in recent months has gone from bad to worse and the RSGB are pushing Ofcom extremely hard to get things moving.

The meeting between Ofcom, MoD and the RSGB to resolve the situation at 70 CM has been held and an agreement has been reached for the moratorium to be lifted. The MoD is happy for the band to be occupied by Repeaters up to the level of activity as at November 2003. An analysis of the level of occupancy is being prepared and this will be forward to the MoD shortly. Hopefully when this is completed the restrictions will be lifted.

Propagation Studies Committee

No report received

Item 6.00 GROUP REPORTS AND DISCUSSIONS

5MHz Working Group

The 5MHz experiment is working well with 1200 NoV's issued. Of these around 400 are active. A report on the first phase has recently been produced and forward to Ofcom and the MoD. There are some licensing issues with regards to 5MHz emergency communications and Ofcom have been asked if it is allowable for non NoV holders to work the frequency through the 'Talk Through' permit system. The group are considering commissioning two further beacons at 3.5 and 7MHz

AMSAT – UK

A comprehensive report was prepared for the meeting.

The Amateur Satellite Service continues to develop new and innovative satellites for the benefit of the amateur community.

The service is however, facing an increasing number of threats such as Galileo/UWB/WIMAX/WLAN/Zigbee to the amateur microwave bands.

AMSAT–UK are strong supporters of more closer alignment of frequencies used for weak signal terrestrial working and satellite working.

AMSAT-UK still wishes to see Foundation licence holders given satellite operation as part of their licensing package. This has been raised a number of times with both the RA and Ofcom, but unless backing is received from the RSGB Ofcom will not change the position.

It has been a busy year for AMSAT-UK with their work on the 2.4GHz SSETI Express Satellite. The AMSAT colloquium still remains a very popular event and this year the colloquium will be followed by a meeting of the Amateur Radio International Space Station Committee (ARISS).

AMSAT-UK membership is slightly down on previous years but remains stable.

BARTG

No report

BATC

The group continue to actively encourage and promote ATV within the amateur radio community.

CDXC

Members of CDXC remain positive about the future of Amateur Radio. The group itself grows from strength to strength with a membership of around 700.

FOC

The First Class Operators Club reported an increased interest in CW operation amongst radio amateurs. The club were seeing a slight increase in their membership and it is encouraging to note that these new members are of a younger age group.

The club are most concerned regarding any moves towards deregulation and support the RSGB stance on this issue

G-QRP

No report

RCVS

The RCVS National Coordinator reported that the user services had called upon Raynet seven times in the last year.

Internationally, the major emergency occurrence involving amateur radio has been the Tsunami Disaster. This has been well documented elsewhere, but it is noteworthy that not just HF and VHF were used, but also Echolink; several UK amateurs taking turn as Net Control in the Tsunami Relief Net Conference.

The first global Amateur Radio Emergency Conference GAREC 2005 took place in Tampere, Finland on 13/14 June. There were nearly 50 delegates representing 17 countries, including all 3 IARU Regions.

In the UK, RAYNET has made a presentation to the section of the Cabinet Office responsible for communications emergencies. This department is known as the Central Sponsor for Information Assurance (CSIA). Discussions have been held to ascertain their needs regarding communications backup in times of emergency and what the amateur radio community can provide.

UKuG

The UKuG presented their report in the form of a SWOT analysis.

Successes had been the transfer of the RSGB Microwave Newsletter to the UKuG, upgrading of the website and strong attendances at Martlesham and RAL roundtables.

Papers had been produced for input to Ofcom and the Davos conference.

Weaknesses include only modest results on 24GHz SRR, UWB, lack of amateur representation on key regulatory committees and objections to repeaters on 23cms.

Opportunities are seen as working towards common worldwide narrowband segments. spectrum tradeoffs' for smaller better protected primary slots and more cooperation in projects with ATV and Satellite groups.

The major threats to microwave operation continue to be increased commercial and licence exempt use of 3.4 and 5.6GHz. Galileo and its impact on 23cm and widespread noise from low power UWBs in the 3.1 to 10GHz range.

UKSMG

No report received

Item 7.00 AMATEUR SATELLITE SERVICE ALLOCATIONS

AMSAT-UK presented a discussion paper on the current and future frequency allocations for the Amateur Satellite Service. It was agreed that the paper warranted further discussion outside of the current meeting.

Item 8.00 IARU REGION 1 CONFERENCE PAPERS – DAVOS 2005

The meeting reviewed the previously circulated and agreed conference papers.

There were no corrections or deletions

Item 9.00 FORUM WEBSITE

The meeting was made aware of the Spectrum Forum website and was encouraged to use it.

Item 10.00 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

There was one item of AOB. The UKuG raised their concerns over lack of progress with Microwave beacon applications. It was also pointed out that there were no formal Beacon/Repeater listings.

Item 11.00 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next full meeting of the Spectrum Forum will be Saturday 10th June 2006.