



UK Six Metre Group Spectrum Forum Report 2019

UKSMG remains the leading dedicated group for six metre operators world-wide. This year we have continued to take a pro-active role in fostering the global six-metre community by promoting activity on the band and working to enhance the enjoyment of operators by publishing our quarterly journal Six News, providing support systems like the UKSMG DX Desktop, sponsoring beacons, and supporting activity from remote and rare locations.

Six metres is booming and every year is different. This year openings from Europe to Japan were amazingly good and it is gratifying that there is plenty of activity particularly in Europe, North America and Japan. SSB and CW are not dead but FT8 is now clearly the dominant mode for DX working on six metres. It remains to be seen whether the introduction of FT4 will have much impact in the coming year, perhaps for rapid-fire QSOs during single-hop Es openings, but the multi-dB loss of sensitivity v/s FT8 will probably limit adoption.

UKSMG membership has now stabilised again and we have just under 600 members, of whom nearly 40% are from outside the UK. Digital-only membership represents just over a third of the total.

We have continued to fund beacons, DXpeditions and home-base activity from new and/or rare locations, with significant success in promoting activity. We have also made donations to events and services which are of significant value to six metre enthusiasts – including making a donation to the ON4KST chat page and also providing financial support for the biennial G3WOS 50 MHz BBQ, at which event we also held our 2019 AGM. The main limit to our sponsorship activity has, as usual, been finding enough good causes to support - UKSMG is very financially sound but we want to spend our members' money wisely, so we are always careful to vet requests from, for instance, DXpeditions. There's no point funding an expedition which won't give the band the focus it needs.

One addition to our activities this year has been to promote introductory club talks more actively. An initial approach via the RSGB Region 10 Representative produced enquiries from ten clubs and this has led to half a dozen talks so far, to very appreciative audiences. Hopefully this has enticed a few more people onto the 'magic band'! We're hoping to extend the programme next year.

Of course the big recent development is the successful outcome from WRC-19, extending and consolidating 50 MHz access in ITU Region 1. UKSMG has played its part by working with RSGB and lobbying Ofcom to play a more proactive role in support of this agenda item, but major thanks are due to RSGB and IARU for their hard work over many months and years, and we'd particularly like to thank to Dave Court, Murray Niman and John Regnault for their dedication.

The outcome from the WRC does pose one specific issue, though. The news that large numbers of Russian operators may be coming onto the band is of course excellent, but the fact that their limited allocation will not include the IARU R1 MGM segment is bound to cause some friction. The suggestion has already been raised, on social media, of moving the main FT8 frequency down from 50.313 to below 50.280 so that the Russians can join in!

Chris Deacon
UKSMG Chairman
24 November 2019