



RSGB 2020 Spectrum Forum Meeting Minutes

Saturday 7 November 2020 at 10.30am by Webex

Attendees:

- Murray Niman G6JYB, Chair
- Dave Wilson M0OBW (President)
- Ian Shepherd G4EVK (Board Chair)
- Len Paget GM0ONX (Board Director)
- Ian Greenshields G4FSU (HF Manager)
- John Regnault G4SWX (VHF Manager)
- Barry Lewis G4SJH (Microwave Manager)
- Richard Lamont G4DYA (Intruder Watch)
- John Rogers M0JAV (EMCC Chair)
- Andrew Barrett G8DOR (ETCC Chair)
- Ian Pawson G0FCT, (CSC Chair)
- Steve Nichols G0KYA (PSC)
- Graham Shirville (AMSAT)
- Ian Brothwell G4EAN (BARTG)
- Noel Matthews G8GTZ (BATC/ETCC)
- Chris Duckling G3SVL (CDXC)
- Dean Saxton G4WQI (FOC)
- Steve Hartley G0FUW (GQRP)
- Greg Mossop G0DUB (RAYNET-UK)
- Neil Underwood G4LDR (UKuG)
- Chris Deacon G4IFX (UKSMG/PSC)
- Martin Sach G8KDF (IARU EMC)
- Graham Coomber G0NBI (GM Department)

1 Arrangements

Murray G6JYB thanked Graham G0NBI for handling the webex invites and volunteering to take the minutes.

2 Apologies

- Peter Barville, G3XJS (GQRP) – *covered by Steve Hartley*
- Tony Barren G3YYH (VMARS)

It was noted that Bob Titterington G3ORY had stepped down from the Forum, although he would continue to provide ARDF input as required. Bob was thanked for his input over many years.

Murray G6JYB also asked for any amendments to the submitted reports to be forwarded to him as soon as possible.

3 Actions arising from the previous Minutes

3.1 50 MHz

It was noted that clarity was still awaited for ordinary amateurs about the ITU 50 MHz allocation +6dB(uV/m) country border field strength requirement to protect primary services in certain countries. The new Radio Regulations from WRC-19 don't formally take effect until January 2021 and national flowdown (if any) may take longer still.

3.2 5 MHz

It was reported that discussions are due to resume with Ofcom to better align the UK-specific 'bandlets' with the WRC-15 international allocation. Ultimately, Primary User support is needed.

4 Spectrum/EMC Reports

4.1 HF Manager

Ian G4FSU reported that the forthcoming ITU WRC-23 conference had no specific agenda items for the amateur service at HF. This means that the current frequency allocations are unlikely to change in the foreseeable future. Whilst this is good news for our current allocations, it also means that any extensions to the 3.5 MHz, 7 MHz, or 10 MHz bands are extremely unlikely.

It was noted that various emails and questions on HF matters are received, often relating to cases of poor or possibly 'illegal' operation.

4.2 VHF Manager

John G4SWX advised that the latest 146 MHz -147 MHz band report submitted to Ofcom had been very well received and that this had contributed to the decision to extend the current facility for a further 12 months. *(a copy is included in the meeting pack)*

John drew attention to the fact that although there had been an increase in VHF/UHF amateur activity as a result of the coronavirus pandemic, a number of the new modes appear to be "locking out" newcomers who may only be equipped with simple FM equipment. It has been suggested that some repeater channels should be set aside for FM use only to make things easier for newcomers.

4.3 Microwave Manager

Barry G4SJH reported that although 2020 had been a difficult year with Covid-19 mitigation measures restricting travel and social gatherings, there had been good activity levels with many stations operating at home, perhaps for the first time.

Noting that the QO-100 geostationary satellite still continues to attract interest and new people into this area of spectrum, it was confirmed that AMSAT-DL coordinated the operating band plan.

4.4 Intruder Watch

Richard G4DYA highlighted the challenges posed by frequency-agile intruders such as 'Over The Horizon Radar' (OTHR). It was noted that the agreed protocol with Ofcom is that only regular and persistent intruders can be reported (i.e. that can be observed and recorded on three separate occasions) thus precluding any formal investigation. Interestingly, the recent upswing in SSB activity such as during the CQWW contest seemed to deter such intruders from the part of the spectrum in use.

4.5 EMC Committee

John M0JAV reported that 117 cases had been handled by the helpdesk during the year.

RSGB EMCC members continue to review relevant standards at BSI level and try to influence national committees. Investigation activity, which had been severely curtailed by Covid 19, would hopefully restart as soon as possible, although more volunteers were needed for this work.

John G4SWX highlighted a need for "best product" recommendations in respect of EMC. It was pointed out that previous RSGB studies (such as into solar panels and LEDs) had found that substandard installation was often the cause of reported problems rather than brand-specific deficiencies. Some retail products can also vary considerably from batch to batch

5 WRC-23 Update on 23cms / Galileo

Barry G4SJH reported on the work in progress in CEPT and ITU-R. The top priority was to counter perceived threats to the operation of the Galileo system on 23cms.

It was noted that one or two cases of interference from ATV reported from, and dealt with, in Germany had now been escalated to both a European and global level. The result is that there were now working groups in both CEPT and ITU-R with a planned discussion at WRC-23

IARU (led by Region-1), as a member of ITU-R, had formed a working group and had already made contributions to both CEPT and ITU-R. This has focussed to date on providing education about the amateur services and activity in the 23cm band. IARU had always expressed view that the interference potential from amateur services is overstated and very low. The aim is to reinforce this view and advance the position that any co-existence difficulties should remain a national issue.

6 IARU Region 1 2020 Virtual Conference Outcome and 2021 Bandplans

Murray reported on the successful RSGB team effort that had resulted in 10 formal RSGB inputs plus a major contribution to IARU C7-EMC work, noting that the majority of the input was to the VHF-Microwave C5 committee. Almost all of the RSGB papers initially seen in Spectrum Forum were supported at the IARU event.

It was noted that the Region-1 VHF Handbook and revised band plans would be published in the next few weeks with various modifications to VHF and Microwave bands and changes to bandwidth recommendations in certain sections at 29 MHz and 50 MHz. The RSGB drafts will be circulated to forum members.

7 Ofcom EMF Update & Next Steps

John M0JAV reported on recent discussions with Ofcom about the forthcoming changes to the amateur radio licence conditions with respect to compliance with EMF regulations. It was noted that Ofcom were seeking to foster a climate of compliance rather than pursuing a “high handed” enforcement approach, but they were clear that action would be taken in instances of reckless behaviour.

John demonstrated the work underway (in conjunction with the ARRL) to develop tools to assist amateurs demonstrate compliance. These were intended to be adjuncts to the proposed calculator that Ofcom would be providing. It was anticipated that about 70% of amateurs could satisfy the Ofcom requirements by a straightforward iteration of the calculator.

It was noted that this work would be shared with the VLT in a week's time at which point it would be in the public domain. It was agreed that SF members should send any comments to John well before 14th November.

8 RSGB Committee Reports

8.1 Emerging Technology Coordination Committee (ETCC)

Andrew G8DOR reported a significant increase in voice repeater and gateway proposals in line with the increased Amateur activity during lockdown. This had resulted in processing 100+ additional new applications beyond the annual norm

8.2 Contest Support Committee (HF/VHF)

Ian G0FCT reported that activity had noticeably increased from the time of the first lockdowns and this had continued throughout the year. It was noted that it was proposed to run a series of HOPE QSO – type events on HF over the coming holiday period.

8.3 Propagation Studies Committee (PSC)

It was noted that Steve Nichols G0KYA and colleagues had carried out extensive work to update the HF Beacon Listings on the RSGB website during the summer.

9 Group Reports

Murray thanked the following for their reports which were noted, plus comments as per below:-

9.1 AMSAT-UK

Ongoing and innovative satellite activities were noted

9.2 BARTG

Report noted.

9.3 BATC

It was noted that the ATV community continues to innovate with reduced-bandwidth (RB-DATV) transmissions on VHF and UHF bands. Murray suggested that this innovation could be extended to the 29 MHz band next year in line with the new band plan.

9.4 CDXC

Chris G3SVL highlighted that CDXC members had embraced the call to provide evidence for VDSL interference and, where appropriate, refer problems to Ofcom. Unfortunately, despite swift responses by OpenReach, nothing appeared to have changed.

John M0JAV echoed this problem, reporting that of the 92 responses that the EMC committee had received, no individual had achieved an improved VDSL situation. He reported that Ofcom would be approached formally with a summary of reports received by the Society. Murray also noted the CDXC interest in a more liberal regulatory regime for top band.

9.5 FOC

Issues noted on HF intruders, noise and WPT

9.6 GQRP

Steve G0FUW and GQRP were thanked for inputs on the EMF consultation and draft calculator

9.7 RAYNET-UK

Greg GODUB highlighted that a particular concern of RAYNET groups is the proposed sharing of the upper part of 50MHz with experimental wide bandwidth data modes.

9.8 UK Microwave Group (UKuG)

The significant upsurge in the UK of the use of the band 122 GHz band was noted. It was suggested that the successes in this band should be promoted far wider than the Microwave Group, both within and outside the RSGB.

9.9 UK Six Metre Group (UKSMG)

Chris Deacon noted the increase in activity due to COVID and good propagation during the extended summer period. He highlighted the potential threat of “robot” digital operation in contests.

9.10 The Four Metres Website (70MHz.org)

The website is being rebuilt and needs new volunteers.

9.11 VMARS

Impact of the HF Winlink service were highlighted, although solutions were not obvious.

10/11 DoNM and Any other Business

Wireless Power Interference:

Martin offered to present how Monte-Carlo techniques can model aggregate interference from multiple nearby sources. Given the strong interest in the EMF calculator during this meeting as well, it was agreed to try and schedule a future demonstration session.

Date of Next Meeting: Saturday 6 November 2021, format to be determined.