



Report to the RSGB Spectrum Forum Meeting - November 2021

1 General position

Membership of CDXC currently stands around 720 - with 21% being overseas members. This makes us the largest DX Club in Europe. Our members are primarily active on the HF bands and use CW, SSB and Data modes in their pursuit of DXing and contesting. We are a major sponsor to DXpeditions and produce a full-colour magazine four times a year.

CDXC is committed to promoting good operating standards on all modes for DX'ers, DXpeditions and testers.

2 VDSL

There have been fewer reports of VDSL QRM since my report to the 2020 meeting. This is likely to be due to members finding workarounds or just accepting the situation. It is also possible that members have resorted to wsjt-x modes on HF where better signal recovery from the noise is possible.

OFCOM's lack of interest has, it seems, generated apathy and the default position has deteriorated to a 'waste of time complaining' scenario. CDXC would like to see a more rapid offer and uptake of FTTP and improved OFCOM recognition of the problem VDSL causes to our HF bands.

3 Equipment EMC requirements enforcement

The noise floor on HF continues to grow with seemingly little effort by OFCOM and Trading Standards to stem the flow of 'CE-marked but non-compliant' goods into the UK. SMPS and wall-wart chargers are the bane of HF DX'ers lives – and all for the sake of a few pence for components. We offer support to the RSGB and OFCOM in all efforts to improve the situation.

4 E M Field Exposure

CDXC compliments the RSGB EMC Committee on the excellent work it has done on providing advice and guidance for all amateurs on the terms of our new licences. Without their help many CDXC members would have been extremely concerned.

The requirements for HF and LF do not come into force until May and November 2022 respectively but we expect the majority of our members to be compliant or at least have only minor work to do to become compliant. Obviously those with smaller gardens who rely on ground-mounted verticals have the biggest concerns and we may find some of those leaving the hobby. That would be a real shame for some who have been licenced half a century with similar set ups.

5 COVID-19 impact

5.1 DXpeditions

Up until last month there had been only a handful of DXpeditions, and they were predominantly one-man events. Things have changed and we are starting to see DXpeditions on the air again. The pile-ups are enormous even for less rare DXCCs which suggests a latent hunger for this sort of activity.

We have also seen in this last year the collapse of a trip to Bouvet Island - one of the rarest DXCCs according to Club Log. This was due to the sale of the reliable and amateur-friendly ship capable of navigating the South Atlantic safely. Fortunately Norwegian members from the original team have resurrected the effort with another boat, but their budget is close to three-quarters of a million US dollars.

5.2 Events

COVID has caused the cancellation of the rallies, conventions and hamfests which form part of our normal way of meeting our world-wide membership. Zoom-type meetings have been a replacement for some of our more isolated members; we are ever-hopeful that things will have some return to normality in 2022. We are still planning to hold our May 2022 DX Convention face-to-face.

5.3 Contests

Although not a specific contest Club, CDXC does promote its own 'DX Challenges' and encourages members to improve their skills by entering contests. These continue to be extremely popular.

5.4 Other pressures

Covid restrictions have caused problems among members who needed assistance with aerial repairs but this has eased over the summer. Collecting larger for sale items and SK clearances were a problem during lockdown too.

6 Concerns

CDXC members remain split on the impact of wsjt-x modes: are they a great enabler for those with poor sites and/or QRP or do they spell the death knell for conventional modes? It is true that there is always activity on the FT8 / FT4 HF frequencies – with signals sometimes well above the noise floor - while the CW and SSB sections are quiet. Legacy data mode QSOs have declined and modes such as RTTY are to be heard in quantity only in dedicated contests.

From a spectrum point of view this is potentially disastrous. The only time any of our HF bands are busy is in contests. Casual ragchewing in any mode and Club nets have continued to decline as email, WhatsApp and their like take over. We really do have a 'use it or lose it' problem looming.

7 New band plans

As always, the CDXC (Region 1) members' wish list continues to include 1,800 – 1,810; have full legal power in the 1,850 – 2,000 segment; gain 3,800 – 4,000 and 7,200 – 7,300.

There is a continued demand for a high power license for chasing DX and contesting where we in the UK are at a disadvantage to nearly all of our close neighbours.

Chris Duckling, G3SVL

Chairman

CDXC: The UK DX Foundation