

REPORT TO RSGB SPECTRUM FORUM OCTOBER 2022

Introduction to RAYNET

RAYNET-UK encompasses all groups involved with voluntary and emergency communications in the United Kingdom. As groups have come back to normal operations after COVID the number of local groups has stabilised to 110 and membership has dropped slightly with ~1675 members which is probably a function of having two yearly membership renewals for some groups.

Spectrum Utilisation

RAYNET continues to make use of all the allocations provided within the RSGB Band Plan to meet the needs of the User Services. This may be due to capacity constraints in a particular band or because of high noise levels generated by other spectrum users at event sites.

The ability to use the 70cm 'wide split' frequencies (flexed by $\pm 12.5\text{kHz}$) for Talkthrough purposes together with non-standard frequency splits between existing frequencies in the bandplan noted as 'May be used for Emergency Communications' has increased in popularity with groups who continue to translate COVID projects into reality.

It was noted though that the ETCC licenced GB3MF as an 'Event Repeater' on the 70cm 'wide split' frequencies for an event in June 2022. This use was quite in line with the 'Community Event' nature of the event, and footnote in the bandplan. However, co-ordination between the repeater keeper and RAYNET groups was 'fortuitous' given he is a RAYNET member. If ETCC plan on continuing this concept then it would be helpful if ETCC could at least inform us of the use so we can advise groups to 'flex' their own usage as described above.

We have kept members up to date with changes to the Ofcom licence conditions with regard to EMF exposure limits and direct everyone to use the RSGB calculator as the recognised tool to carry out compliance assessments. Use of our dedicated DMR server has continued to grow, allowing more members to develop their digital mode experience, primarily by linking local low power hotspots to the system. A similar approach is likely to be trialled with groups who are interested in developing mesh networking capabilities or deploying NPR70 as our User Services continue to express interest in services beyond resilient voice communications.

Noting that emergency planning is devolved to the local level in the UK, RAYNET groups have been involved where invited in various wide area power loss exercises around the country. We are just reaching the point where we are best placed to share best practice between areas who may not normally have spoken to each other, or who did not involve the voluntary sector in preparations. While the probability of wide area power loss remains low. RAYNET will be prepared as usual to respond to requests over the winter period, and in association with colleagues from other emergency communications groups around IARU Region 1 will offer what mutual assistance we can.

Finally, we appreciate the inclusion of RAYNET-UK in the Special Interest Groups section of RadCom and the encouragement of the President to submit information on the wide area power loss topic for the December issue which was quite timely.

Greg Mossop
Trustee, RAYNET-UK
27th October 2022