

UK SAR OPERATORS GROUP **INLAND CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE**

Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on Saturday 14th December, 2002 at 11.00 hrs. The venue was Headquarters, Lancashire Constabulary, Hutton, nr. Preston, Lancashire.

1 PRESENT

1	Supt. P. Sinclair	Chairman, Northern Constabulary, ACPO(S)
2	Mr. M. Vlasto	RNLI, Maritime and Aviation Consultative Committee
3	Mr. T. Redfern	Association of Heads of Outdoor Education Centres
4	Dr. R. D. Mehew	National Caving Association
5	Mr. A. Ebben	Royal Life Saving Society
6	Mr. N. Owen	Youth Hostel Association
7	Dr. A. S. G. Jones	Secretary

APOLOGIES.

Mr. John Muston	Scout Association
Mr. Derek Stansfield	Duke of Edinburgh Award.

WELCOME

The Chairman welcomed Andrew Ebben, RLSS, to meetings of the Committee.

2 MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF 15th JUNE, 2002.

The minutes of the meeting held on Saturday 15th June, 2002 had been circulated. They were taken as read and were accepted as a true record.

3 MATTERS ARISING.

A) Item 3 A: Changes in Membership.

The meeting was informed that the Royal Life Saving Society had been invited to become a member of the Committee.

B) Item 5 F: Air Ambulances.

The Secretary informed the meeting that he had received a letter from Tom Redfern, AHOEC, on the subject of the use of Air Ambulances in the hills. The letter had been copied and forwarded to Mr. Brian Fanthom. No response had been received by the date of this meeting.

There was still a high level of concern about the deployment of Air Ambulances to incidents in remote areas.

During a wide ranging discussion the following points, amongst others were made:-

- i) The Police are required to co-ordinate SAR incidents on land.
- ii) The MCA are becoming involved with incidents on inland waters.
- iii) There had been three recent incidents in Scotland where Air Ambulances had been deployed without information being passed to Police Control Rooms.
- iv) In one case Air Ambulance personnel had wasted time in re-assessing the casualty after the casualty had been assessed and treated by the Team's Medical Officer.
- v) The Air Ambulance had to land-on and shut down before the casualty could be loaded into the helicopter.

- vi) There were still problems when a leader of a group had been taken away leaving behind a confused and leaderless group on the hills.
- vii) In some cases Air Ambulance personnel were inappropriately dressed for the environmental conditions.
- viii) The Maritime and Aviation Consultative Committee had mirrored concerns about proper co-ordination.
- ix) There was a problem as to which organisation actually represented Air Ambulances at a national level.
- x) It would seem that the Air Ambulance Federation was a fund raising organisation.
- xi) The BHAB had been invited to join the Maritime and Aviation Consultative Committee to represent all Air Ambulance organisations.
- xii) It would seem that much more work was required to improve co-ordination and the flow of information to the proper authorities.
- xiii) The meeting was informed that Air Ambulances operating in the Lake District have Channel 73 but did not make use of the channel.
- xiv) Concern was expressed about the safety of ground units.
- xv) Comment was made on the inappropriate use of large helicopters in the maritime field, for example children on lillos.
- xvi) The meeting was informed that the subject was to be raised with the General Purposes Committee of ACPO(S).
- xvii) The subject would be raised at the UK SAR Operators Group meeting to be held on 8th January, 2003.
- xviii) There was a general problem of communications and forwarding of relevant information.
- xix) The view was expressed that it was essential that current factual information (accounts) on incidents be sent to the Chairman for forwarding to the Operators Group.
- xx) It was agreed that the Secretary should write to the Regional (MRC) Secretaries with a request for factual information on deployments of Air Ambulances and lack of adequate co-ordination.
- xxi) It was pointed out that, technically, Air Ambulances were not part of the Ambulance service but independent charities (Trusts).
- xxii) There were serious problems with emergency calls from mobile telephones being taken by call centres with subsequent inappropriate routing of the call.
- xxiii) There was a discussion on the problems of routing of emergency calls from mobile telephones.
- xxiv) It was agreed that a simple request for "POLICE" for any land SAR incident was the message to get out to the public. The Police would then co-ordinate the appropriate response.
- xxv) It was suggested that this Committee give further consideration to the subject of emergency calls.
- xxvi) It was the view of the Committee that there needs to be a consistent national approach.
- xxvii) It was agreed that, with proper co-ordination and deployment, Air Ambulances were or could be a very valuable resource.

C) Item 7: Route Cards.

The route card produced by the Northern Constabulary⁶ would be circulated with the minutes of this meeting.

The Secretary had received an e-mail from the Duke of Edinburgh Award. The Award had a standard example for use by groups. It was agreed that a copy of this route card would be circulated with the minutes.

The Scout Association had forwarded a copy of their route card which would be circulated.

The point was made that what was needed was a reliable, national system for handling responses to un-cancelled route cards. There was also the problem when groups came down safely and left the area but failed to cancel their route card.

The Committee was informed that, in the Lake District, it was hoped to develop a system of boxes where route cards could be left. The Committee would be informed of developments.

4 CORRESPONDENCE.

The Secretary reported that just routine correspondence with the Chairman and letters of apologies had been dealt with since the last meeting of the Committee.

5 REPORT FROM THE UK SAR OPERATORS GROUP:

A) Meeting of 12th September, 2002.

The minutes of the Operators Group meeting held on Thursday 12th September, 2002 had been circulated with the agenda for this meeting.

Papers circulated with the minutes included:-

- i) The Memorandum of Understanding between the Maritime and Coastguard Agency and the Royal National Lifeboat Institution. Members were reminded that the RNLI were developing SAR capabilities for inland waters.
- ii) The Generic Risk Assessment for Land Search and Rescue. Members were informed that the GRA was a draft Home Office document which was intended for issue as advice to Chief Constables. Members attention was drawn to the differences between Established SAR Teams and Community Volunteers.

There followed a short discussion on the pros and cons of the draft GRA. It was pointed out that the draft GRA was a Home Office document that had yet to be circulated to Chief Constables.

The importance of adequate training and proper documentation of that training was stressed.

The meeting strongly supported a meeting between the Operators Group and the Health and Safety Executive.

B) UK SAR Framework Document.

The final, colour version of the Framework Document had been circulated with the agenda for this meeting. The Document may be downloaded from the Web Site as a pdf file (828 KB). It may be printed without charge. The full URL for the document is:-

http://www.mcga.gov.uk/sandr/framework/UK_SAR_Framework_Document.pdf

Members were informed that it was intended to issue a revision of the Framework Document towards the end of 2003. Corrections, additions and/or suggestions should be sent to the Secretary by Easter 2003.

It was noted that on page 33, the number of teams listed for the Yorkshire Dales Rescue Panel should be two (2).

C) Helicopter Coverage Report.

The meeting was informed that the report on Helicopter Coverage was in the process of being printed by the MCA. The question of circulation was being considered.

It was suggested that the report should be put on the Web Site. If the report was too large in could be split into parts for entering on the Web Site.

There was a short discussion on Harmonisation and procurement of the next generation of SAR Helicopters. The Sea King was due to be phased out of service in 2015.

6 MATTERS FROM MARITIME AND AVIATION CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE

A report of the proceedings of the last meeting of the Maritime and Aviation Consultative Committee, held on Tuesday 26th November, 2002 was given to the meeting. The minutes of that meeting would be circulated with the minutes of this meeting.

There was short discussion on SAR Incident Data Basis, particularly with regard to Inland waters.

The meeting was informed that the MRC, MRC of S and ALSAR were giving some consideration to the development of a common data base for inland SAR incidents.

7 ANY OTHER BUSINESS.

A) The Secretary informed the meeting that the UKMTB was concerned about the draft Temporary Work at Heights directive. and its impact on various aspects of mountaineering instruction.

The meeting was given some background on the European Directive. The UKMTB, BMC and NCA were conducting negotiations. A view was expressed that that it seemed that representations were being ignored.

B) The Chairman informed the Committee of developments in Scotland. There were three main areas of concern:-

- i) Accident Insurance. It is intended that cover would be increased to £250,000. There was a real need for a uniform level of cover over the whole of the UK.
- ii) Communications particularly with regard to mmO2 and Airwave.
- iii) Sustainability of MRTs with regard to finance. Approaches were being made to the Scottish Executive for ring fenced funding for MRTs. There followed a short discussion of various aspects of funding.

C) The meeting was informed that in the Lake District there had been large areas without walls or fences. After the Foot and Mouth outbreak, the National Trust has erected electric fences (pulsed, high voltage). Any compasses within some 30 metres of the fence was seriously affected. The fences were not visible from 30 metres in mist and darkness. Problems had been encountered.

D) The meeting was informed that the RNLI had written to Chief Constables and CACFOA on the subject of their possible response to flooding. The RNLI did not have a statutory response but could offer assistance. Some good responses had been received. Once again, the need for proper co-ordination was stressed.

8 DATE, TIME AND VENUE OF NEXT MEETING.

It was agreed that it would highly desirable to hold meetings of the Committee during the working week. It was agreed that, in order of priority, the next meeting of the Committee would be held on:-

- 1 Tuesday 17th June, 2003.
- 2 Wednesday 18th June, 2003.
- 3 Thursday 19th June, 2003
- 4 Saturday 21st June, 2003.

It was agreed that Lancashire Constabulary Headquarters was a most suitable venue. The final date of the meeting would depend on the availability of a suitable room.

Any items for the agenda of the next meeting should be sent to the Secretary by Monday 12th May, 2003.

.Marine Science Labs.,
Menai Bridge,
Anglesey. LL59 5EY

Dr. A. S. G. Jones, MBE,
Secretary.

PLEASE NOTE WELL:-

As of Monday 16th December, 2002 the only date available at Lancashire Constabulary Headquarters is Saturday 21st June, 2003. The Secretary has made a provisional booking. The Secretary will confer with the Booking Officer before the agenda of the next meeting is circulated. It may then be possible to get one of the weekday dates nearer the time.