

# **UK SAR OPERATORS GROUP**

## **INLAND CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE**

**Web site URL: [www.uk-sar.org.uk](http://www.uk-sar.org.uk)**

Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on Wednesday 15th December, 2004 at 11.00 hrs. The venue was Room 1/84, Merseyside Police HQ, Canning Place Liverpool. L69 1JD

### **PRESENT**

- 1 Supt. John Darcy - Chairman, Northern Constabulary, ACPO(S)
- 2 Chief Supt. Paul Forrester - Merseyside Police, ACPO
- 3 Mr. Adrian Carey - RNLI, Maritime & Aviation Consultative Committee
- 4 Mr. Tom Redfern, - Association of Heads of Outdoor Education Centres
- 5 Mr. Derek Stansfield - Duke of Edinburgh Award
- 6 Mr. Geoff Saunders - Long Distance Walkers' Association
- 7 Mrs. Rebecca Binstead - Maritime and Coastguard Agency
- 8 Dr. R. D. Mehew - National Caving Association
- 9 Mr. Adrian Lole - Royal Life Saving Society
- 10 Mr. John Muston - Scout Association
- 11 Dr. A. S. G. Jones, Secretary

### **1 APOLOGIES**

Mr. Michael Vlasto - Maritime & Aviation Consultative Committee  
Mr. Sam Crimble - Adventurous Activities Licensing Authority  
Mr. Nick Owen - Youth Hostel Association  
Mr. John Cousins - Mountain Leader Training UK

### **2 MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF 16th JUNE, 2004**

The minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday 16th June, 2004 had been circulated. They were taken as read and were accepted as a true record.

### **3 MATTERS ARISING**

#### A) Item 3, A: UK SAR Web Site

The Secretary informed the meeting that one PITO paper entitled "Interoperability between Land Search and Rescue and the Airwave Infrastructure" had been placed on the UK SAR web site.

#### B) Item 3 B v: Emergency 999 calls

The Chairman reported that there had been an almost complete lack of progress since the last meeting. The Secretary informed the meeting that the matter had been considered by the Operators Group and had been referred to the 999 Liaison Committee. The 999 Liaison Committee required detailed and factual information of any apparent misrouting of calls.

The MRC will put forward the suggestion that at call centres, the system is so flagged that calls for assistance for land SAR are routed to the Police in the first instance.

#### C) Item 6 Fi: Life Saving Skills for Police Officers

The meeting was informed that ACPO had not made any conscious decision to withdraw basic life saving skills from training. There were problems with the availability of time for training

and the increased aspects that had to be covered. Variations in recruitment had contributed to the problems of training in life saving skills. The situation was fluid. It had been agreed that life saving skills were a duty, not a sport and that training needed to be continued.

The meeting was informed that in Scotland training had been restricted to one two-hour session with the emphasis on working from a bank or edge and making use of buoyancy aids.

The meeting was informed that the RNLI provided some swift water training for members likely to be involved with inland flooding situations. The Fire and Rescue services were interested. It was agreed that the RNLI would forward a note to the Chairman and the ACPO representative.

The RLSS was working with a group of Police Officers to revise the Police life saving skills. Consideration was being given to the development of a new award scheme for the Police. It was planned to develop training materials. It was agreed that the RLSS would liaise with the Chairman and the ACPO representative.

#### **4 CORRESPONDENCE**

i) The Secretary reported that he had written to Andrew Ebben wishing him a full recovery and assuring him that the RLSS would continue to receive papers from this Committee.

ii) An e-mail from Chief Supt. Forrester concerning parking at Merseyside Headquarters was circulated to all those who had informed the Secretary that they would be attending this meeting.

#### **5 REPORT FROM THE UK SAR OPERATORS GROUP.**

##### A) Meeting of Thursday 8th July, 2004

The minutes of the meeting of the Operators Group held on Thursday 8th July, 2004 had been circulated with the agenda for this meeting. Members attention was drawn to:-

Item 4.3 and Action 1. Routing of 999 calls.

Item 4.6. Funding for UK SAR Information Leaflets.

Mention was made of the a Police web site that contained examples of an interactive site containing a series of question to assess vulnerability, in case of this site, to burglary. The suggestion was made that something similar could be developed with specific reference to safety on the mountains and hills.

Item 4.8, 4.8.5 and Action 4. Update on Adjournment Debate of Funding of Mountain, Lowland and Cave Rescue in England and Wales

Members were given a summary of the current situation. There followed a short discussion. With regard to a volunteer forum it was hope to convene the first meeting before the next UK SAR Operators Group meeting. A venue had been provisionally booked.

Item 6.7. Satellite Communications Working Group.

Members were informed that the use of satellite emergency beacons on land was contrary to regulations. A major problem was the development of a registration data base and the question as to whom should maintain a data base of beacons used on land.

Item 9.0. Proposal for Working at Height Regulations - HSE

The subject would be considered under item 7 of the agenda for this meeting.

Item 10.3. The meeting was informed that O2 were withdrawing the paging service.

B) Meeting of Wednesday 13th October, 2004.

The minutes of the meeting of the Operators Group held on Wednesday 13th October, 2004 had been circulated with the agenda for this meeting. Members attention was drawn to:-

Item 5.1.2. SAR Communications Working Group.

Members were informed that a revised Implementation and Control Document for the Land SAR Channels was being written and would be placed on the UK SAR web site when ready.

Item 6. Volunteer Forum

There had been no further developments up to the date of this meeting.

Item 7. Presentation on Air Ambulance Operations.

The matter had been discussed at the last meeting of the Maritime and Aviation Consultative Committee.

Item 8. Presentation on Beach Life Guarding, who is Responsible

Item 10. Immediate and Emergency Care (IEC) for SAR Forces Working Group Proposal

Item 11.1. Online Route Cards.

The point was made that it was not appropriate for rescue teams to be holders of route cards. In the past much time had been wasted in chasing up route cards and had not been cancelled. At the Operators Group meeting it had been agreed that the onus for reporting remained with the responsible person on the ground.

Item, 11.3 Withdrawal of Public telephone boxes.

The meeting was informed that there had been a protest about the withdrawal of public telephone boxes in Aberdeenshire.

Item 11.4. Vetting of New Response Teams

A question was raised on the subject of monitoring established teams and new teams. The Secretary gave a brief outline of the current situation with respect to the MRC, BCRC and ALSAR.

## **6 MARITIME AND AVIATION CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE**

A) Meeting of Wednesday 9th June, 2004

A verbal report had been presented at the last meeting of this Committee. The minutes from that meeting had been circulated form information with the agenda of this meeting.

B) Meeting of Tuesday 7th December, 2004

The Committee received a verbal report of the proceedings of the meeting of Maritime and Aviation Consultative Committee held on 7th December, 2004. The papers would be circulated when available.

There was a discussion on the deployment of Air Ambulances. The Confederation of Helicopter Ambulance Services (CHAS) was represented on the Operators Group. Mention was

made of the drafting of a protocol (SOP) but it was apparent that there had been a significant lack of appropriate consultation. The draft SOP was being considered by ACPO. Mention was made of a tasking of an Air Ambulance to a ferry in the Irish Sea. It appeared that the Air Ambulance which had not been tasked by HMCG, had requested permission to land on the ferry. The matter was being investigated.

The meeting was informed that the Ambulance Service Association (ASA) had not attended an Operators Group meeting for some considerable time. The subject of adequate representation of the ASA was being pursued.

There was a short discussion on Beach Life Guarding.

The Maritime and Aviation Consultative Committee had also considered the problem of the removal of Public Telephone boxes in remote areas.

## **7 HEALTH AND SAFETY; DRAFT DIRECTIVE ON WORKING AT HEIGHTS**

The meeting was informed that matter seemed to be progressing slowly. A letter from the Chair of the Health and Safety Commission had been received by the group pursuing the matter. The contents were not as helpful as had been hoped. It appeared that the HSC was strongly against exemption for the Adventurous Activities Sector. Scottish MPs and MSPs had taken up the subject as well. They, too, were concerned about the possible adverse impact of the regulations on the rural economy, particularly in the Highlands.

The debate and pressure for an amelioration continues.

## **8 ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

### A) Transport Select Committee Inquiry into Search and Rescue

The Press Notice announcing the Transport Select Committee's inquiry into Search and Rescue had been circulated prior to the meeting.

The meeting was told that the MCA wished to stress the importance of volunteer groups to search and rescue. The MRC and BCRC had contributed comments for consideration for inclusion in a submission from the MCA. In addition, the MRC would be making a submission in its own right. It would seem that the Transport Select Committee were not aware of the Framework Document.

It was suggested that members may wish to consider sending in submissions in their right. The Secretary drew members attention to the deadline of Friday 21st January, 2005 for submissions.

### B) Identification of Locations

A query was raised about an incident in which an ambulance had been requested to attend a rescue being carried out by a Cave Rescue Team. The person had apparently made the call on a mobile phone and had been asked for the Post Code of the Cave Entrance.

There was a short discussion. It would seem that some Ambulance Control Rooms used Post Codes to identify locations and did not appear to be able to handle National Grid References. It was suggested that a general comment on locations should be referred to the Operators Group for forwarding to the 999 Liaison Committee.

## **9 DATE, TIME AND VENUE OF THE NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting of the Committee will be held on Wednesday 22nd June, 2005 at 10.30 for 11.00 hrs. The venue will be:

Room 1/84,  
Merseyside Police HQ,  
Canning Place,  
Liverpool. L69 1JD

A light lunch will be provided.

Any items for the agenda of the next meeting should be sent to the Secretary by 20th May, 2005.

3 Maes Tyddyn To  
Menai Bridge,  
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Dr. A. S. G. Jones, MBE  
Secretary.