

UK SAR OPERATORS GROUP
INLAND CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE

Web site URL: www.uk-sar.org.uk

Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on Wednesday 22nd June, 2005 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. Andrew Ashton - RNLI, Maritime & Aviation Consultative Committee
- 4 Mr. Derek Stansfield - Duke of Edinburgh Award
- 5 Mr. Geoff Saunders - Long Distance Walkers' Association
- 6 Mrs. Rebecca Binstead - Maritime and Coastguard Agency
- 7 Ms Julie Carlton - Maritime and Coastguard Agency
- 8 Dr. R. D. Mehew - British Caving Association
- 9 Dr. Cliff Nelson - Royal Life Saving Society
- 10 Mr. K. C. Gordon - UK Mountain Training Board
- 11 Mr. Christian Grammer - Commercial Passengers Boat Operators Association
- 12 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
Mr. Tom Redfern, - Association of Heads of Outdoor Education Centres.

WELCOME

The Chairman welcomed the following to the meeting:
Julie Carlton
K. C. Gordon
Cliff Nelson
Christian Grammer

CONGRATULATIONS

The Chairman, on behalf of the Committee, congratulated Michael Vlasto, Chairman of the Maritime and Aviation Consultative Committee, on the award of the OBE in Her Majesty's Birthday Honours List.

2 MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF 15th DECEMBER, 2004

The minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday 15th December, 2004 had been circulated. They were taken as read and were accepted as a true record.

3 MATTERS ARISING

A) Item 3, A: Life Saving Skills training for Police Officers.

The meeting was given a brief update. Bulk recruiting had resulted in strain on training facilities. Now, a significant part of the training was supplied in force. Training

was linked to the Police Competency Framework which would include life saving. Actual details were being discussed. The subject will be considered by ACPO Council.

The meeting was informed that the RLSS were considering different options, included was a) distance learning and b) specifically designed courses.

For ACPO(S) the Water Emergency Committee was held by the Northern Constabulary.

It was suggested that the RLSS may wish to make contact with Mr. Ian Daines, ACC, South Yorkshire Police. His e-mail address is:-

ian.daines@southyorks.pnn.police.uk

B) Item 8: Transport Select Committee Inquiry in Search and Rescue.

This item would be considered under agenda Item 5 A for this meeting.

4 CORRESPONDENCE

A) E-mail from Roger Wild, Mountain Safety Advisor, Mountaineering Council of Scotland.

Draft of emergency procedures card which would be made available to the public throughout Scotland. The draft paper was tabled and is attached as Appendix I to these minutes.

There was a short discussion. It was generally felt with regard to land rescue the advice should be to dial 999 and ask for the Police with a possible request that the Police inform the Ambulance Service.

Mention was made of the mnemonic SAD CHALETS. A version is attached as Appendix II to these minutes. It would be useful to include some comments about safe routes of access.

B) From John Cousins, UK MTB.

He would welcome clear advice on using a mobile phone in the event of an emergency. If UKSAR made this available he could distribute such advice very widely to all training providers of walking and climbing activities, all new candidates on our schemes and to the public at large through our highly popular text books 'Hill Walking', 'Rock Climbing - Essential Skills and Techniques' and the forthcoming 'Winter Walking & Climbing'.

C) Scout Association.

John Muston has retired as a member of the National Activities Team. The Scouts wish to become a Corresponding member, to receive papers of meeting so that occasional points may be picked up.

5 REPORT FROM THE UK SAR OPERATORS GROUP.

Meeting of Tuesday 22nd February, 2005,

Minutes of the meeting were circulated with the agenda for this meeting. The Secretary drew members attention to the following points:-

i) Item 4.10.1: Withdrawal of Public Telephone Boxes in remote areas.

The matter had been referred to the 999 Liaison Committee. It was the decision of this Committee that telephone boxes in remote areas that were very under used should be withdrawn

ii) Item 5.1: Report from Communications Working Group

iii) Item 5.1.10: Use of mobile telephones in emergencies.

The matter had been discussed under Item 4A for this meeting. The matter had been referred to the Communications Working Group to draft a policy on the use of mobile telephones in emergencies.

The subject would be a substantive item on the agenda of the next meeting of the CWG. It was hoped that a draft paper could be presented.

iv) Item 5.3.2: CHAS Protocol.

Two meetings had been held and a considerable amount of work has been done. The paper had been completely rewritten. A progress report would be presented to the next meeting of the Operators Group. It was suggested that a copy of the redrafted document should be forwarded to Mr. Alister McWhirter, Q.P.M. Chief Constable of Suffolk Constabulary who chaired the ACPO Helicopter Working Group

Mention was made of a circular letter from the ARCC to Ambulance Services. It was suggested that Ambulance Authorities may wish to consider routing calls direct to ARCC. The view was expressed that such routing could result in possible delays. It was felt that the letter needed further clarification. The MCA would be seeking clarification from ARCC

v) Item 5.7: IEC Working Group. One meeting had been held at which a numbers of points had been discussed and a way forward outlined.. A second meeting is expected in Mid July.

vi) Item 6: Transport Select Committee Enquiry into Search and Rescue. The meeting was given a brief report on the proceedings. The report of the Select Committee had been published and was available for download on the Parliamentary Web Site. The Government response is being prepared.

vii) Item 8: Proposal from PDMRO

viii) Item 11.2 SAR on Inland Waters. To be considered as a specific item under Item 8 for this meeting.

ix) The next meeting of the Operators Group is due to be held on Thursday 28th July, 2005.

6 MARITIME AND AVIATION CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE

A) Minutes of the meeting held on 7th December, 2004, discussed at the last meeting had been circulated.

B) Meeting of Wednesday 15th June, 2005.

The last meeting of the Maritime and Aviation Consultative Committee actually had been held on Friday 17th June, 2005 in the Isle of Man. A verbal report of the proceedings was given to the meeting. The minutes would be circulated when available. There was a short discussion.

7 HEALTH AND SAFETY; DRAFT DIRECTIVE ON WORKING AT HEIGHTS

John Cousins had sent the following report:-

"Work at Height: Thanks to everyone who has supported the adventure activity industry in our negotiations with government. We believe good sense prevailed and it is worth noting that the Regulatory Impact Assessment produced specifically for the proposed Work at Height (Adventure Activity) Regulations acknowledges that there is no monetary benefit to the legislation given that they cannot see how they could improve our safety record. Alarminglly, they estimate that the Regs will cost the industry £800,000 in time devoted to complying with them. In truth we will devote no time to complying with the Work at Height Regulations BUT we will devote considerably more time and money to working at height with everyone's health and safety in mind (if you see what I mean)."

The comment was made that it appeared that the Minister had seen sense and had told the HSE to back off. Full exemption had been granted to the sector.

The regulations had been issued but the Outdoor Activities Sector was specifically excluded and a precedent concerning exemptions had been set.

John Cousins, Tom Redfern and others were thanked for all the hard work which had resulted in a satisfactory outcome.

8 SAR ON INLAND WATERS

The meeting was informed that SAR on inland waters was a subject of increasing concern. Every commercial operator on inland waters, as elsewhere, was required to hold a SAR co-operation plan which had been agreed by local SAR providers. The plan was to be lodged with the appropriate SAR providers within the vessels normal operating area. The SAR Co-operation plan required that drills and exercises were conducted on a regular basis. With regard to the maritime environment, HMCG was the responsible authority. There was, however, considerable confusion with regard to inland waters as to who was the appropriate SAR authority to hold and exercise the plan. Where HMCG was not responsible for providing a SAR response the SAR Co-operation plan should be held by the police who are responsible for the provision of inland SAR..

The meeting was informed that from 1st April HMCG had, at the request of specific police forces, taken on the responsibility for the co-ordination of SAR on some bodies of inland waters in the Lake District and elsewhere. The point was made that HMCG wished to work in conjunction with the local rescue resources when required. HMCG wished to develop what was in existence and would not take away any of the existing SAR facilities, but would work in harmony with them to develop the most effective SAR response.

During the discussion the following points were made:-

- i) In general, the commercial boat operators regarded the development as beneficial.
- ii) HMCG needed to appreciate the importance of detailed local area knowledge.
- iii) Communications from Ullswater to HMCG Liverpool did not exist at present, but are under development.
- iv) Most of the incidents were of a relatively small nature.
- v) In Northern Ireland, all SAR was now co-ordinated by HMCG with the agreement of the Police Service of Northern Ireland.
- vi) Each lake which has a passenger boat operating on it has a local SAR plan.
- vii) A question was raised as to the situation on long stretches of rivers.
- viii) It is not known how many incidents were occurring on inland waters. HMCG desired that incidents be reported so that a realistic data base may be established.
- ix) The Scottish Police Forces have signed up to reporting incidents on inland waters.
- x) There still existed the problem of defining what was and what not an incident.
- xi) The RNLI had and continued to develop relationships with private rescue craft operators. The offer was made of assistance with some aspects, particularly training.
- xii) Mention was made of the Adventurous Activities sector with regard to water borne activities. It would be desirable for the sector to have lists of areas covered by HMCG. The list is in Appendix III.

At the conclusion of the discussion it was accepted that there would be teething problems which would be resolved in time. The importance of establishing adequate lines of communication was stressed.

It was agreed that the Domestic Passenger Ship Steering Group (DPSSG) be invited to become a member of this Committee.

9 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

A) Mention was made of an HSE Press Release. A copy would attached to these minutes as Appendix IV

B) There was a brief discussion on insurance for volunteer SAR teams. The Scottish Police Forces had agreed a uniform cover in Scotland to the amount of £250,000. The matter was still under discussion by ACPO Emergency Procedures. An attempt was being

made to develop a national policy to cover all voluntary teams in England and Wales. The level of insurance was yet to be resolved.

C) The meeting was given a brief update on the proposed legislation on Corporate manslaughter. The MCA had made representations to the Home Office. Unlawful killing had been removed from the legislation. A question had been raised as to how the legislation would affect voluntary bodies. It would seem that the legislation would not apply to unincorporated bodies. Clarification was still being sought on some aspects, particularly with regard to individuals and inter relationships between volunteer bodies and statute bodies..

D) Mentioned was made of an article in CASBAG, the magazine of the Mountain Rescue Committee of Scotland. The article discussed funding in Scotland. The meeting was informed that the Scottish Executive were auditing the current expenditure. There was some doubt about future funding.

E) The meeting was informed that the ACPO portfolio for SAR would be moving to another force. Offers to take on the portfolio had been requested. In the meantime Chief Supt. Forrester was happy to continue to support SAR.

The Chairman, on behalf of the Committee expressed sincere thanks to Chief Supt. Forrester for all his work and support over the past few years.

10 DATE, TIME AND VENUE OF THE NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Committee will be held on Thursday 15th December, 2005 at 10.30 for 11.00 hrs. The venue will be:

The Stoddart Suite
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 15th November, 2005.

ADDENDUM

A) It was agreed that, in future, the Committee's papers would be circulated electronically.

B) Derek Stansfield offered his apologies for absence at the next meeting.

3 Maes Tyddyn To
Menai Bridge,
Menai Bridge,
Anglesey. LL59 5BF

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

Mountaineering Council of Scotland

Emergency procedures in the event of an incident

- Stay calm. Take a few moments to assess the situation and decide what to do.
- What should be done immediately to safeguard the group?
- Assess any casualties. Remember ABC – airway, breathing, and circulation (signs of life / blood loss).
- Make casualty warm and comfortable.
- Treat injuries (remember first principle “do no harm”).
- Determine your exact position on the map and consider the options for:-
 - (a) descent to safety
 - (b) finding shelter
 - (c) staying put

If it is decided to seek help

If you have a mobile phone -

- Try to conserve battery life by having all the details to hand before phoning. A list of the details needed is shown below. Write them down if possible.
- If there is no mobile coverage at your location consider whether it might be worth moving to another location.
- Check who else in your party has a mobile phone (and coverage) and evaluate the amount of battery life available in the event of additional calls being necessary.

(a) Phone 999 and ask for the POLICE. When connected provide:-

(b) Location of the incident (grid reference, map sheet number, name of mountain area and description of the terrain).

(c) Number and names of people in the party and their condition.

(d) Any injuries and names of casualties (if there are injuries ask the Police to inform the Ambulance Service).

Be ready to provide the following additional information -

- Telephone number of the phone you are using and any other phones in the group.
- The nature of the incident – what happened?
- Time of the incident.
- Weather conditions including wind speed and visibility at the accident site.
- Equipment which is at the accident site (warm clothing, group shelter etc.).
- Location of where you are phoning from - if different from incident site.

If going for help on foot -

- Remember to take all the details shown above. Write them down if possible.

- If possible, leave at least one person with the casualty.
- If possible, send two or more people for help.
- Make the casualty's location easily seen by search parties.
- The emergency signal is six blasts on the whistle (or six torch flashes) repeated every minute.

For information about mountain safety contact:

Mountaineering Council of Scotland

Tel: 01738 638 227

www.mountaineering-scotland.org.uk

SAD CHALETS

- S** **Summon assistance** via 999 - Police
- A** **Assess the situation**
- D** **Disseminate the following to the Police Control Room**
- C** **Casualty or casualties**
 - Condition of casualty or casualties
 - Some indication of nature of injuries
- H** **Hazards**
 - Natural or man-made
 - Weather conditions at site
- A** **Access**
 - Suggestions as to best route to incident site
 - Obstructions
- L** **Location**
 - As precise as possible
 - Grid reference - 2 letter 100 Kim square and 6 figures
- E** **Emergency**
 - Urgency of the situation
- T** **Type**
- S** **SAFETY** of all concerned

AREAS ON INLAND WATERS WHERE SAR IS CO-ORDINATED BY HMCG

ENGLAND

Tidal River Thames*
River Severn Estuary as far as Gloucester
Norfolk Broads*
Suffolk Broads
Lake District Windermere
 Coniston
 Derwentwater
 Ullswater
Tidal estuaries where VHF coverage exists

SCOTLAND

Loch Ness
Loch Lochy
Loch Oich

NORTHERN IRELAND

Lough Neagh
Lough Erne*

* RNLI Assets in place.

The judgement is at <http://www.bailii.org/ew/cases/EWHC/Admin/2005/713.html>

Text starts:-

Recent Judgement on Section 3 of the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974

It was reported that a recent judgement ([2005] EWHC 713 (Admin)) has usefully clarified the application of Section 3 of the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974. Section 3 lays a duty on employers to minimise the risk to the health and safety of non employees whilst conducting their business. The case arose from a desire of early morning swimmers to use one of the Hampstead Heath ponds to swim in. The Corporation of London who owned the ponds and operated them as out door swimming pools, were given legal advice that they would have a duty under Section 3 even though the intent was to use the pond without any supervision from the Corporation of London. The swimmers appealed to the High Court and won the case.

The judge in deciding that there was no such duty, stated "for the purposes of section 3 of the 1974 Act, if an adult swimmer with knowledge of the risks of swimming chooses to swim unsupervised, the risks he incurs are the result of his decision and not of the permission given to him to swim. And it follows that those risks are not the result of the conduct by the employer of his undertaking, and the employer is not liable to be convicted of an offence under that provision."

Responding to adverse comment following the decision, the Health and Safety Executive stated "HSE welcomes the outcome, which is a victory for common sense and fully in line with our approach. We are not in the business of stamping out simple pleasures such as swimming. Sensible health and safety is about managing risks, not eliminating them. Too often it is easier to ban rather than to manage, which is a complete misrepresentation of the purpose of health and safety law."

Text ends

HSE Press Office: Putting the record straight

The Editor
Hampstead & Highgate Express
100a Avenue Road
Hampstead
London
NW3 3HF

3 May 2005

Dear Sir/Madam

The Ham & High's article on the judgment on swimming in Hampstead ponds (Swimmers celebrate High Court triumph 29 April) is inaccurate. Far from refusing to clarify the Corporation's responsibilities, our advice to both parties, dating back to late 2003, went into some detail and was referred to at length by the judge. However, as we also made clear, we could not give a blanket guarantee that health and safety law would not apply; we could not provide an indemnity against a future prosecution because, as the judge pointed out, the facts of any accident cannot be anticipated.

HSE welcomes the outcome, which is a victory for common sense and fully in line with our approach. We are not in the business of stamping out simple pleasures such as swimming. Sensible health and safety is about managing risks, not eliminating them. Too often it is easier to ban rather than to manage, which is a complete misrepresentation of the purpose of health and safety law.

Yours faithfully

Timothy Walker
Director General
Health and Safety Executive
Rose Court
2 Southwark Bridge
London SE1 9HS
Tel: 0207 717 6000