



### RSGB Strategy 2022 Narrative – what does this all mean?

The RSGB's strategy to guide our work to 2022 was launched at the 2017 Annual General Meeting. The previous strategy was badged as 'the Board Strategy' and whilst it is the Board's job to lead the way, we want the new strategy to be applicable to every part of the Society. We want it to be the RSGB's Strategy. One of the key aims in developing this new strategy has, therefore, been to produce something that most members, volunteers and staff will recognise and want to support.

The single-page strategy hides a huge amount of work and is the result of many meetings, group discussions and consultations involving a large number of people; the Board, your Regional Council, the Committee Chairs, the Honorary Officers, Headquarters staff and the amateur radio community have all been involved in generating, challenging and validating each other's ideas. We now have a strategy that has significant support.

This narrative is intended to provide some background to the words in the strategy, an insight into the thinking that led to the final version and an indication of what we are doing to turn the high-level strategy into a more detailed operational plan.

The Board will be reviewing progress and will report to the members. You may also see reports in RadCom and across our other communications channels as things begin to happen. To highlight those that relate to the strategy we will be tagging them with the strategy logo – watch this space!

### Our purpose – why are we here?

That may seem an odd question for an organisation that is over one hundred years old but it is important to check that we are not working to some outdated principle. One of the clearest messages to come out of the 2015 Amateur Radio Survey was that the objects stated in the RSGB's formal Articles of Association were still seen to be valid by the majority of those that took part in the survey. That is quite an endorsement of the authors' skill as the original text dates from 1922. However, trying to boil down several paragraphs into a single sentence to answer the question, "Why does the RSGB exist?" proved quite a challenge but we did produce a draft statement.

There was 91% agreement with the draft statement of purpose but suggestions from the consultation exercise helped to refine it further. The final version reflects the need to look after what we have in amateur radio and wireless communication, seek out more and let people know what they have to offer. It also hints that different people get different things out of what we do; some use radio, some seek understanding but we all enjoy what we do;

**"The RSGB exists to protect, promote and enhance the use, understanding and enjoyment of wireless communication."**

The use of the term 'wireless communication' attracted a number of comments in the consultation feedback. Some welcomed it, some said they thought it was old-fashioned. The term has gone full circle and is now in widespread use in education and in industry and



'radio' is used more to refer to broadcasting. It is also worth noting that there are members experimenting with optical communication, which is definitely not radio, but it is wireless.

The single most commented on omission from the draft strategy was the absence of any explicit statement on the geographical coverage of the RSGB, which extends beyond the confines of Great Britain. To address this, a footnote has been added to the strategy, and may well be incorporated into the Articles of Association and/or Bylaws in due course. This is based on the terminology used by Ofcom in the UK Amateur Radio Licence; **“The RSGB represents radio amateurs within the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, the Channel Islands and the Isle of Man, both nationally and internationally.”**

### **Our values – what are the things that underpin everything we do?**

Again, the breadth of the Amateur Radio Service created considerable difficulties in trying to capture what we value in short form. Whether you spend your time chasing DX, studying changes in the ionosphere, trying to improve your contest ratings, striving to stretch the distance covered by the highest microwave bands or winning medals in ARDF championships, the four values included in the strategy appear to be universal to all radio amateurs.

Whilst there were a broad range of views in the consultation feedback about what we should, or should not, value, there was over 94% agreement that the four core values we proposed were the right ones.

**Enjoyment, Progression, Community and Service** – these are the watchwords we must use to check ourselves when making decisions, developing services, or negotiating with the Regulators; are we being true to our stated values?

The inclusion of 'progression' has caused the most reaction. Some responses to the consultation clearly read this as a requirement for mandatory licence progression, gaining support from some, and threats of mutiny from others! To be clear, the progression referred to here is much wider than moving from a Foundation to a Full licence; it is about making progress with knowledge, operating skills to maximise your enjoyment. Whilst we would all love to see more Full Licence Holders, there is no intention that the RSGB or Ofcom should force people to move through the licence levels, any more than we intend to make Full licence holders undertake mandatory continuing personal development!

### **Our goal for 2022 – where do we want to be?**

The consultation feedback included lots of specific things we might like to include in action plans but 92% of the consultation returns agreed with the draft goal. One recurring theme did stand out as worthy of inclusion – representation. We are a membership-based Society that represents UK radio amateurs at national and international level so it seems entirely appropriate that representation should feature in our strategy.

Our goal is **“To have an active and thriving amateur radio community, supported by a strong, representative and influential RSGB”**.

This goal has two key components: an active and thriving amateur radio community and a strong, representative and influential national society.



The inescapable truth is that the amateur radio community is ageing and we need to seek out and encourage new people if that community is to thrive. We also need it to be active to show that amateur radio is not only alive but healthy and vibrant; a strong justification for our continued use of the wireless spectrum.

For that spectrum to be protected, and for radio amateurs to be supported through the exchange of ideas and representation at national and international level, the RSGB has to have strength in numbers, a strong voice, reflecting the community it represents and respect from the regulators and international bodies.

Through elections for our volunteer positions of President, Directors and Regional Managers we have a democracy, and through forums, consultations, and the Have Your Say web page, we have channels for members' views to be heard so they can be represented in our work.

We believe we have much of that in place already but we also recognise that we need to build on our strengths so that in five years' time we will have maintained and enhanced that position.

### **Our strategic priorities – how we will reach our 2022 goal**

These are the specific things that will enable us to reach our goal for 2022. The draft versions gained 86% agreement in the consultation feedback. Many of the consultation comments were seeking inclusion of their particular interest and others asked about specific outputs or measures. We expect each one of the priorities to have a number of initiatives or projects underneath it. That is where we are expecting to see specific measurable details and we will be looking to our Committees, Honorary Officers and HQ Staff to identify and deliver projects that support one or more of our eight priorities:

#### **Growth – we will grow and develop amateur radio**

We need to improve our marketing, promotion and explanation of what amateur radio has to offer. Whether newcomers come from schools, universities, retirement clubs or friends and family is not important, but increasing the number of people interested in wireless communication is vital to the sustainability and growth of the amateur radio community. We also need to support the personal development of those who have joined the community so they are encouraged to progress and so grow the body of expertise within the community.

#### **Spectrum – we will maintain and enhance radio amateurs' ability to use the radio spectrum**

We need to fend off challenges from other radio users and to ensure there is spectrum we can use in spite of the ever-rising noise floor. That may mean finding innovative ways of working through the noise as well as combating non-compliant noise sources. When the opportunity arises we have to be able to make strong bids for new spectrum with proposals for innovative uses, not simply more of the same.



### **Participation – we will support and encourage active participation in amateur radio**

We want to see more licence holders playing an active role in amateur radio. Whether that is joining a regular net, taking part in contests, carrying out propagation studies, running training courses, organising club events or activating islands, summits or sheds on the air, we all benefit if amateur radio is seen to be a place where things happen and people enjoy taking part.

### **Research – we will promote active involvement in research and technical development**

Whilst we can, quite rightly, take pride in our long history and our radio heritage, we must not allow amateur radio to become fixed in time. Technology moves on and there are huge opportunities open to us if we engage with the academic and professional radio, electronics and computing communities so we can all learn from each other.

### **Diversity – we will encourage and respect the full range of amateur radio activities, in all its diversity**

This means looking at broadening our horizons and seeking out new ways of enjoying the wireless spectrum. That does not mean we all get into microwaves or the latest digital data mode but we all need to be aware that there is more to amateur radio than the local repeater, or the weekly HF net. We must all be respectful of other people's interests and be tolerant of competing views to make joining and belonging to the amateur radio community a welcoming experience for all.

### **Membership – we will increase the proportion of radio amateurs who are members of the RSGB**

This will require us to ensure that we offer the right kind of services and show RSGB membership to be good value for money. We also need to make all radio amateurs aware of the good work that the Society does and how it has evolved so that they are encouraged to support their national society.

### **Recognition – we will support, encourage and recognise our volunteers and staff**

This is absolutely vital in an organisation that is so reliant on the goodwill and time that is given freely by its volunteers and the hard work of a small dedicated HQ staff. We must be ready to celebrate success and recognise those who have contributed, either as individuals or as teams.

### **Organisation – we will ensure that the RSGB is an effective, efficient and flexible organisation that works with and listens to our members, clubs and special interest groups to meet the changing needs of the amateur radio community**



All of this is critical to the RSGB's sustainability. We must maintain a sound business model to keep us solvent and we must strive to deliver what we say we will. Things will no doubt change in the next five years and we need to be flexible to adapt to those changes, whatever they might be. We are particularly mindful of the need to change the way we interact with our members as well as the many clubs and special interest groups that work at local, national and international level. In short, we need an organisation that fits 21<sup>st</sup> century ways of working.

### Next steps?

Now we have the strategy to signpost our direction we need to look at the work of the RSGB's Committees, Honorary Officers and Headquarters to see how much of what is currently being done fits our priorities, what needs to carry on, what needs to stop, and what new things we need to start doing. That will take a little time but there will be some quick wins which we will report through RadCom and our other communication channels.

Look out for the strategy 2022 logo that will flag articles, projects and events that are intended to deliver one or more of our priorities.

If you would like to help deliver the strategy, take a look at our volunteering web-page: [www.rsgb.org/volunteers](http://www.rsgb.org/volunteers)