



VLT meeting held on 14 November 2020 via Webex

Ian welcomed Emily Groves, M7MLE, recently appointed Chair of the Legacy Sub Committee, to her first meeting.

Chair's opening remarks

Ian G4EVK conveyed a message from Steve Thomas, M1ACB in which it was noted with pleasure that his recovery was continuing well.

He paid tribute to the staff who had risen to the challenges posed by lockdown and ensured that there had been no disruption to member services.

He advised that the migration to Office 365 was now in progress with a planned roll out to Regional Teams and committees.

He intended to consult shortly on the future structure, format and roles of the VLT and delivery teams. Every VLT member was invited to contribute with the objective of completing the review by the end of the year.

Ofcom Licence Changes – what it will mean for us

John Rogers, M0JAV, reported on the changes that were to be introduced to the Amateur Radio Licence requiring each licensee to demonstrate compliance with ICNRP guidelines for limiting exposure to ionising radiation. He stressed that Ofcom were seeking to foster a climate of compliance rather than a high-handed approach to enforcement but that action would be taken against reckless behaviour.

He presented the work underway to support and assist amateurs demonstrate compliance, including an on-line tool to assist in the derivation of EIRP. It was estimated that 60%-65% of amateur radio stations would be able to demonstrate compliance by a simple iteration of the Ofcom provided calculator.

(Presentation to RR/Clubs)

Exams and Beyond

Dave Wilson, M0OBW presented data demonstrating the extremely positive impact on the number of people taking exams by the introduction of Remote Invigilation in April. He gave thanks to the team of 30 invigilators who had made this possible. As well increased numbers and pass rates, it was noted that the figures demonstrated good progression through the licence classes.

It was agreed that the slides relating to the number of passes per individual region should be sent to the regional teams, and that selected examination statistics would be published on the website.

He reported that the “Direct to Full Licence” syllabus was now complete and being reviewed by stakeholders prior to its planned release in the first quarter of 2021. He confirmed that this exam would be on-line only.

Building experience

Dave reported that 37 Clubs across all regions had signed up despite the negative impact on normal club activity caused by the COVID 19 restrictions.

As a result of the initiative to create a new Facebook group for M7 licensees, the December edition of the “Tonight@8” series will be given by Jonathan Mitchener, G0DVJ who will give a jargon-free talk on “what’s next” to encourage broadening horizons.

Future Learning

Dave noted that of the 12 members of the delivery team only four were active. In order to generate new ideas and take them forward would require more input from other VLT members and delivery teams.

Convention & GOTA2C updates

Heather Parsons shared viewing statistics for this year’s on-line Convention, noting that the event had been available to everyone at no cost. Staging the event had required a team of people with different skills to the norm and had involved a huge amount of preparatory work and input on the day. Feedback had been very positive with praise for the professional standard of the production. It was noted that more than 3600 people had viewed some or all of the content, a figure that was still rising. The reach of the previous convention format was usually about 500. Furthermore, 3200 people had shared and/or liked the series of tweets and Facebook posts associated with the event.

GOTA2C – a joint initiative with the NHS

Heather reported that this high-visibility initiative continued to enjoy wide external support, especially from Ofcom, the NHS and the BBC. The programme would continue into the Spring with a focus on diversity and accessibility and how everyone can participate in amateur radio.

The next series of activities would be to “Get on the air for Christmas”, (GOTA4C) aimed in particular at those who may feel isolated during the holiday period.

The activities planned so far were

- The activation of GB1NHS
- Two short QSO parties using the same format as the previous HOPE events
- A construction competition
- Publicity for locally organised nets
- Encouragement for all licence holders to use the /NHS suffix.

VLT members were asked to point clubs to the GOTA2C webpage and encourage new licensees to get involved.

Beyond Exams

Heather asked VLT members to recommend our new practical videos (4500 views with overwhelming support), talk to clubs about the new things that are happening and, for those who use social media, like, retweet and share. Personal recommendations make a real difference and help increase our visibility.

ARDF Loan equipment.

Stewart Bryant advised that sets of ARDF equipment were now being constructed for free, long-term loan to clubs and other groups. Regions 8,9,10,13 were already involved but if others wish to participate, please contact Bob Titterington ardf.chairman@rsgb.org.uk

On Air Abuse

Len Paget reminded the meeting that he had asked for documented examples of complaints about on-air abuse that had been submitted to Ofcom. A recent FOI request had only uncovered 3 in the past 5 years. Full details of the complaint together with the Ofcom case number and outcome were required.

Questions

Outstanding vacancies

Ian reported that a number of people had expressed an interest in the two Nominations Director vacancies.

It was agreed that all volunteer vacancies should be easily visible on a single webpage

Contacting new M7 licences.

Dave Wilson confirmed that due to Data Protection Legislation and our agreement with Ofcom, it was not possible to share personal details of exam candidates other than for the purposes of administering the examinations. Remote invigilators had been asked to urge candidates to make contact with RRs and Clubs by signposting to the website.

He agreed to review the congratulation letter that is sent to successful candidates to see if more could be done to encourage contact with the RSGB.

Lack of comms between delivery teams

It was confirmed that comms and document sharing will be improved with the rollout of Office 365.

Extending the scope and definition of amateur radio

Stewart Bryant asked for anyone who wished to develop thinking and ideas to contact him by email g3ysx@rsgb.org.uk It was recognised that there was significant interest in experimentation with radio communications, often without the need for an amateur radio licence. This raised strategic questions about how the Society should relate to the wireless society.