

DEVON & CORNWALL BEACH SAFETY GROUP

9th MARCH 2006, 11am at NEWQUAY SPORTS CENTRE

MINUTES

Attendees :

Rolo Deards (Chairman), Carrick D C	John Broad, RNLI
Roy Lawford (Vice-Chairman), Kerrier D C	James Instance, H M Coastguard
Richard Allen, Kerrier D C	Andy Phillips, East Devon
Phill Drew, Penwith D C	Richard Fedorowicz, Emergency Planning, CCC
Sue Nicholls, (Secretariat), Penwith D C	
Steve Instance, RNLI	

Apologies :

Dave Hocking	Tracey Higgs
Colin Ramsey	James Ortiz

REF:	ISSUES DISCUSSED	ACTION BY
1.	<p><u>Notes of the meeting held on 23rd November 2005</u></p> <p>The notes were agreed.</p>	
2.	<p><u>Nominations</u></p> <p>Chairman – A nomination had been received from James Ortiz for Phill Drew to take over as Chairman for the new year. Further nominations at the meeting were received from Roy Lawford and Richard Allen that Rolo Deards remain as Chair which was agreed by all present.</p> <p>Vice Chairman – A nomination was made by Phill Drew for Roy Lawford to become Vice Chairman, which was seconded by Rolo Deards.</p> <p>Secretariat – The Chairman proposed that the RNLI remain as Secretariat unless anyone else wanted to put forward a nomination. Phill Drew said he would like to nominate Sue Nicholls from Penwith District Council to take over as Secretariat which was seconded by Richard Allen and agreed by all those present.</p>	
3.	<p><u>Matters Arising</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><u>Signage</u> - Phill Drew began by saying that he had recently attended a Beach Safety Single Panel (SIP) at Cornwall County Council. He said that the group were looking at the impact beach safety has on Tourism in the area. The FEE have informed ENCAMS that as of 2008 all beaches applying for the Blue Flag Award must comply with the RNLI signage. Phill reported that the UK Beach Managers Forum were not happy with this decision taken by ENCAMS without consultation with its members.	

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	<p>ENCAMS have said that they did consult with the National Beach safety Council but there does not appear to have been any consultation between them and their Members. Phill expressed grave concerns over the lack of consultation from the National Beach Safety Council with its Members. Phill said it would no doubt be brought up at the AGM on 21st March with Tony Jones.</p> <p>Richard Fedorowicz said that the MCA had written to the Emergency Planning Department saying that they would like to give local authorities a free sticker to fit in the centre of the life ring holder which would detail information on how to call the Coastguard in the event of an emergency. They would also have the provision for an Ordnance Survey six figure grid reference to be written on the sticker. He gave the MCA letter to the Secretariat so that it could be circulated with the Minutes.</p> <p>James Instance, H M Coastguard, said that he was updating maps on their computer system and that by having grid references for all the locations where there are emergency equipment and lifeguard stations the computer can zone in on a particular area during an emergency call if the caller gives them the six figure grid reference. Both Kerrier and Penwith already have grid references on all their coastal rescue equipment. The RNLI currently use their own unique numbering system. James asked if everyone could supply him with their grid references so he could update all their location maps etc</p>	<p>ALL Secretariat</p> <p>ALL</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Risk Assessments</u> – The Chairman asked if everyone had seen the new ILSE Risk Assessments and for any comments. Feedback from those present was that the new model was very long winded and missed a lot of important details. It is now being used in Europe. John Broad said that it had purposely been left open for interpretation. Andy Phillips felt that it did not go into detail regarding numbers of lifeguards and equipment because it was assumed that this would be left to the appropriate Beach Safety Officer who would base their decision of their relevant experience. The new model is possibly to be used for all bathing beaches by 2010 but has not yet been adopted by ENCAMS. • <u>Responsibility</u> – Phill Drew asked that the second sentence from Minute 4 of the last meeting be amended as it was not accurate in that the ODPM have not placed a duty on to Cornwall County Council for Beach Lifeguarding nor have they placed ownership at anyones door. Phill was asked to attend the last meeting of County's Single Issue Panel (SIP) where he did a presentation on the Local Authority perspective of providing lifeguards on beaches. Phill felt that the Devon & Cornwall Beach Safety Group should be represented at County level and asked Richard Fedorowicz if he could take these comments back to Steve Winston at Emergency Planning. Further comments from both Phill and Richard Allen were that the information presented in the Minutes of the SIP were factually incorrect and misleading. <p>Certain incidents were given as examples eg oil drums washed up on beaches and Richard Fedorowicz said he thought the reporting system worked well.</p>	<p>R Fedorowicz</p> <p>ALL</p>

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	<p>Phill said that unfortunately the procedure for going to H M Coastguard when a suspected oil drum was washed ashore did not in fact work and more often than not it was the Coastguard who asked Penwith to remove oil drums from the beaches.</p> <p>Richard Fedorowicz said that he was currently re-writing the G1 protocols and would like feedback from colleagues if they encounter any problems. He reiterated the fact that any suspicious items should be reported to the MCA in the first instance.</p>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <p><u>Black & White Flags</u> – Steve Instance said that the RNLI were now only printing launching information for kite surfers on the Bournemouth and Poole area leaflet. Roy Lawford said that he felt this was misleading for people coming to our area because the black & white flags meant something different. Roy felt that maybe Bournemouth and Poole should use a different coloured flag for kite surfers. Steve felt this was not necessary as it was a completely different area. Andy Phillips agreed with Roy and said he thought that it did contradict the new signage. Rolo Deards said that this does highlight that one system will not necessarily work for every beach and that a local adaption should be considered even though it is giving a confusing message to the public. The RNLI only have 3 or 4 problem kite surfing areas and where this occurs they also put up additional signage. In Bournemouth and Poole they can only launch in one area. It is only recently that areas outside of Devon & Cornwall have begun using the black & white flags.</p> <p>Richard Allen said he felt it is more important to have standardised flags as opposed to signs. Steve reported that the British Standards Agency had issued new guidance last year on flags eg what size, pantone colours.</p> <p>Rolo felt that it was a problem area but that common sense had to be used. Most areas do endeavour to stop kite surfers from launching on busy days when there is no room. It was agreed that this item should be raised at the National Beach Safety Meeting and that everyone present was united in not wanting them to launch in the black & white flagged area.</p> 	<p>R Deards</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <p><u>Coastal Bye Laws</u> – Further to the previous meeting James Ortiz had not yet circulated his bye laws so it was requested that the Secretariat contact him and ask him again to do so. Richard Fedorowicz reported that Cornwall County Council were currently updating their 1984 Act which encompasses dog bans etc. Copies are available from H M Stationery Office for anyone who has not got a clean copy. Richard said he was happy to take back views on how the group wanted it done. Phill Drew said he felt it should be modernised to take into account modern day vessels and terminology.</p> <p>Phill Drew referred to the recent appeal against a jet skier who had been found guilty which had now been overturned and would now have serious implications on future prosecutions/enforcement on incidents of this nature.</p> <p>It was agreed that the Secretariat would circulate copies of the Act and that any suggestions should be passed back to Sue who would give them to</p> 	<p>S Nicholls/J Ortiz</p> <p>S Nicholls</p>

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	<p>Richard Fedorowicz. This needed to be done fairly quickly and Richard would feedback progress to the Chairman. James Instance reported that the MCA would be appealing against the appeal already made concerning the jet skier.</p> <p>He reported that the MCA were continuing in their efforts to deal with water craft mis-use issues and would like any problems reported direct to them.</p> <p>He said that evidence was crucial and ideally they need dates, times, location, photographs etc which would help them to pursue the matter under the Merchant Shipping Act. He reported that the intent was certainly there from the MCA to take action and they were investigating ways in which they may be able to utilise other parts of law. They are keen to clamp down on these individuals. Steve informed the group that there is a Mounts Bay Awareness day being organised through the Jet Ski Club in April. Although this was taking place in Penwith Phill knew nothing of it.</p> <p>Phill said he would like to see the clamp down expanded to speedboats. Steve said that it was open to any irresponsible use. Steve informed the group that the MCA patrol boat "Falcon", could be tasked to monitor certain problem areas for a few days at a time. It was used last year in July and August. However, there is only one vessel for the South West. Roy Lawford asked that it be utilised in the Falmouth area during July and August but that he did not know it was around last year.</p>	<p>J Instance</p>
<p>4.</p>	<p><u>Public Rescue Equipment</u></p> <p>Rolo Deards gave an update on the group he sat on representing the Devon and Cornwall Beach Safety Group, regarding public rescue equipment. He reported that the group were currently looking at old equipment, torpedoes, perry buoys etc and how equipment could be site specific. In Ireland they have now adopted the throw ring as their chosen piece of equipment. The group which consists of the ILSA, RNLI, RLSS and the MCA, have done various tank trials on throwing distances of the various equipment etc. The best one is not suitable for all locations. There will be some beach trials taking place in the Carrick area in the near future and Rolo will keep everyone informed in case anyone would like to attend. Throwing B-Lines on the second attempt is not easy because of having to recover the rope again. Richard Fedorowicz said he had seen a sling shot idea. Rolo reported that the main problem with these pieces of equipment was the weight and ability of most people to use them and the accuracy involved. Richard Allen asked if the group were looking at rescue statistics and what method of rescue equipment was used eg a few metres involved or more. Rolo said that the group were looking at that and emergency telephones, between 10 – 25 metres is the aim. They do not like the use of torpedoes because this means someone has to go in the water as well. The costs of equipment are also being looked at. Andy Phillips reported that his insurers in East Devon say they do not need rescue equipment. North Devon do not provide rescue equipment. Following a discussion Steve Instance and Phill Drew felt that harbours were the only place where it was mandatory to provide rescue equipment. It was often the case that it should come down to risk assessments and the likelihood and severity of an incident occurring. It was commented that after the Polzeath drowning the Coroner stated the rope was not sufficient to carry the weight of the</p>	<p>R Deards</p>

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	casualty.	
5.	<p><u>Surf School Licensing</u></p> <p>As apologies had been received from North Cornwall and Restormel Borough Council Steve Instance offered to provide an update. He reported that Restormel had been using a voluntary scheme but they have now withdrawn it because of enforcement issues and lack of Officer time. Steve reported that North Cornwall District Council were still investigating it for their area. In Restormel some schools did take part but because there was no enforcement this allowed for rogue schools to operate.</p> <p>Richard Allen reported that Kerrier have used the Public Health Act to enforce issues in their area.</p> <p>It was reported that Peter Urqhart was keen to promote approved schools through publicity. The BSA scheme works well and every school is checked twice a year by them. Rolo said that we could not enforce on beaches which the local authority did not own. It is hoped that with new publicity campaigns the public will become more aware of the importance of using licensed surf schools.</p> <p>Roy Lawford said that Kerrier Lifeguards are told to respond to schools compromising safety and then to contact the Police, Environmental Health etc. They have also told schools to limit numbers they take in the water during busy times which most schools have been happy to do. The problems occur with some schools who will go out in flat water which means they go out further and then can get into difficulty. Any problems should be reported to the BSA who can revoke their licence. Both Penwith and Kerrier have refused to sign off the paperwork which Peter Urqhart was asking lifeguards to sign off last year. Phill Drew said it would be interesting to see if the BSA followed up on the incident which occurred at Godrevy as so far nothing had been done. It is apparent that the BSA need to police it and take action against offending schools. It was suggested that maybe a letter could be written from the group to the BSA.</p>	
6.	<p><u>Surf Hire</u></p> <p>Steve Instance reported that there was to be a trial project in Polzeath this summer to improve the quality of surf hire. Polzeath has the highest recorded incidents. The aim is that soft boards should only be hired to beginners, hard boards to competent people who can prove their level of experience etc. There will also be regular checks of the hire shops equipment. Once the surf hire outlet has met the criteria they will become an approved hirer and members of the public will be encouraged to look for the approved hirer sign and use only those outlets. The project is being led by the RNLI, BSA and the Hire Association of Europe. It is envisaged that if the scheme is successful then it will be open to all surf hire outlets. Steve offered to bring the Code of Conduct to the group, which he thought would be ready mid May. Rolo Deards felt that a lot of experience and knowledge existed within the group which he hoped the Surf Hire Group would call upon if needed. Steve continued that they did not want to make the scheme too onerous and gave an example of one shop in Polzeath who hires out 600 boards.</p>	S Instance

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	<p>Phill Drew suggested that the HSE could help with regards to enforcement issues. Steve said that the Hire Association of Europe and local Environmental Health Officers would receive reports of any breaches for them to take relevant action. Phill felt that Section 2 or 3 of the Health & Safety at Work Act would carry more weight. Steve said that the Perranporth drowning highlighted the issue for surf hire outlets to be approved and checked on. All the equipment checks will have to be signed and records kept in order to become an approved hirer. They will receive one announced and one un-announced visit from the RNLI and BSA.</p> <p>Phill Drew expressed concern over the mobile units who can just turn up anywhere and hire out surf equipment. The RNLI are hopeful that people will want to use an approved outlet and so the mobile units will want to take part in the scheme. There was also discussion regarding surf hire outlets hiring equipment even when the red flag is flying although the hirer is duty bound to give safety advice to the person hiring the equipment.</p> <p>There will be publicity material to promote surf schools and surf hire.</p>	
7.	<p><u>Cornwall County Council – Single Issue Panel</u></p> <p>The Chairman felt that this item had been addressed under Matters Arising. Richard Allen expressed concern that Kerrier had not been invited to attend any of their meetings but that he intended to go to the one at the end of March, to which Carrick are also attending. Kerrier have concerns over the accuracy of some of the details in previous Minutes of the County Single Issue Panel. The Chairman thought it seemed strange that there had been a selected list of invitees.</p>	R Allen/R Deards
8.	<p><u>Extended Lifeguard Season</u></p> <p>Steve Instance reported that the RNLI will have 12 beaches open over the Easter weekend, 11 of the North Coast and one on the South Coast. Kerrier are doing the 2 weeks at Easter at Praa Sands and will also have their 24 hour telephone information line operational. Kerrier will also then be covering weekends up until Whitsun, then normal service resumes on 3 beaches. Andy Phillips reported that Brixham have nothing planned due to restricted budgets and staffing. Lifeguards are unfortunately a very low priority for his authority. Steve reported that Perranporth were doing the same as Praa Sands with the local Parish Council were paying for. There are always issues regarding Easter because of spring tides and nice weather. Penwith were hopeful that they would have cover on 3 of their main beaches, Gwithian, Sennen and Porthmeor but were currently awaiting confirmation from their Head of Service.</p>	
9.	<p><u>Any Other Business</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rolo Deards reported that there was the possibility of a new NVQ 2 qualification entitled "Practical Skills for Coastal Zone Management". It was at the draft stage at the moment but his colleague would like feedback from anyone interested in doing the course or from anyone with any advice to offer. Her name is Angela Fairness and her email address is 	ALL

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	<p>angela.fairness@northland.ac.uk If there was enough interest in the course then it was likely that it could be run at Cornwall College.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • John Broad raised the point that under the Terms of Reference for the Group it was stated that the Secretariat would be provided by the RNLI. If this was now not the case then the Terms of Reference needed to be amended and brought back to the group. It was agreed that the Secretariat would amend the Terms of Reference to say that the Secretariat would be elected annually and circulate at the next meeting. • James Instance said that the MCA were updating their database for all beach lifeguard stations and would like to know what IRB or RWC each station has, if any, so that they can call upon them in an emergency. This will also remove the need for the Coastguard to attend an incident if there is already suitable rescue craft on scene (unless requested). He also reminded the group that their primary way of making contact with the lifeguards is by telephone and that he hoped there would always be one person in the station. Phill Drew asked James if the Declared Facility Forms were still required and James said that yes he would still like them to be completed and sent back to him. <p>Phill asked James who should take control during an incident once the MCA arrive on scene if the lifeguards are already dealing with the incident. Last summer there was an incident where Penwith lifeguards were told they were not needed and Phill questioned who had priority.</p> <p>James reported that there is no formal procedure and the only time he would expect the MCA to take control of a scene is during helicopters lifts or cliff rescues because their staff have undergone formal training. He said he hoped that everyone would work together and a common sense approach would be used by personnel.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Chairman reported that the Devon and Cornwall Beach Safety Group are the only ones that send their Minutes into the National Beach Safety Group. They are very pleased with the work that we are doing and Dave Walker of ROSPA would like to include the Devon and Cornwall Group on the front page of their website which would explain who we are, what we do etc. If anyone has any ideas then the Chairman asked that they forward them to him direct, in the meantime he would forward some details on for the website. • The Chairman ended the meeting by thanking the RNLI for providing the Secretariat over the last year. 	<p>S Nicholls</p> <p>J Instance</p> <p>R Deards</p>
10.	<p><u>Dates of Next Meeting</u></p> <p>Thursday 9th November 2006 at 11.00am (venue to be confirmed)</p>	

Meeting Closed : 12.30pm