

# DEVON & CORNWALL BEACH SAFETY GROUP

Meeting held at 11.00am on 22<sup>nd</sup> November 2007 at Restormel Borough Council  
Offices in Newquay

## MINUTES

### Attendees :

Rolo Deards (Chairman), Carrick D C	Steve Instance, RNLI
Ian Gibson, South Hams D C	Colin Ransley, Restormel B C
Richard Spindler, North Somerset Council	James Jarroudi, Torridge D C
Phill Drew, Penwith D C	James Instance, MCA
Sue Nicholls, (Secretariat), Penwith D C	Richard Fedorowicz, Emergency Planning

### Apologies :

James Ortiz, North Cornwall D C	Tracey Higgs, Teinbridge D C
Richard Allen, Kerrier D C	John James, Emergency Planning
Andy Philips, East Devon D C	John Broad, RNLI
Emma Hoare, Caradon D C	

REF:	ISSUES DISCUSSED	ACTION BY
1.	<u>Notes of the AGM meeting held on 15<sup>th</sup> March 2007</u> The notes were agreed.	Rolo Deards & Sue Nicholls
2.	<u>Matters Arising</u>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Richard Fedorowicz informed the group that John James had taken early retirement and was therefore no longer with the County's Emergency Planning Team, Richard said he would attend in future.</li> </ul>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><u>Surf Hire Safety &amp; PCSO Trial</u> Steve said that the inquest regarding the incident at Watergate had taken place but medical reports were unable to prove cause of death so an open verdict was recorded. The RNLI were not reporting this to the HSE as the incident had no effect on the surf hire outlet involved.  Steve was asked how the PCSO Lifeguard trial had worked and he said it had gone very well and would definitely be continuing next season, the RNLI are currently looking at funding for 2008. Steve explained that the PCSO wears a blue/white uniform but in a lifeguard style. Colin agreed the scheme had worked well. Steve commented that it was mostly public order and minor issues that had been dealt with and that crime on Fistral had reduced this year.</li> </ul>	Steve Instance

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	<p>Crime in Perranporth had gone up but this could be because people were now reporting it, Fistril had previously been a crime hotspot in Cornwall. Colin said the PCSOs presence and the ease in which they got rid of campers in the dunes was more effective than the Council could be. The associated litter had reduced and people felt it was a better place to be. Steve said the scheme would continue at both sites again for 2008. There is a possibility that they may increase numbers at those venues but cannot afford to extend the scheme to anywhere else without another partner eg local authority. The Police and RNLI each fund 2 dual badge PCSO/Lifeguards so that there are 2 in the summer and 2 in the winter. These are in addition to the numbers accounted for in the lifeguard service.</p> <p>The Police would like to extend this scheme to 10-15 beaches next season and for instance would like to see them on Porthmeor beach in St Ives. The RNLI are putting the brakes on due to funding issues, the lifeguard training side of it costs next to nothing as can be done with all the other training for lifeguards which occurs anyway. Phill asked if it could be brought in with the new dog control orders? Steve said that once the Local Authorities have set up the arrangements to let the Police enforce these then it could be looked at. The funding would cost approximately £6,000 per authority which is then matched by the RNLI and the Police. Phill said Fixed Penalty Notices will work well with good enforcement. Steve said the RNLI get a third of the benefit and the liaison with all emergency services works well.</p> <p>Steve also mentioned that some of the lost children issues were dealt with as a social welfare case eg when the Police found parents in the pub.</p>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <u>Vice Chairman Position</u></li> </ul> <p>Rolo said that Roy Lawford had resigned and left his post at Kerrier so the group was currently without a Vice Chairman. Rolo asked the group if they were happy to wait for the next AGM in March to nominate a new Vice Chair and the group agreed unanimously to wait.</p>	Rolo Deards
4.	<p><u>Public Rescue Equipment Launch Update</u></p> <p>Rolo said that by now everyone should have received the new PRE guide which had been produced with the help of the RNLI and other partners. Rolo said that from Carrick District Council's point of view they see it as upgrading equipment when required and he hoped that the group did not feel that the recommendations in the guide were too onerous. Ian queried the need for PRE at all? South Hams insurers believe that in some circumstances it is better not to have anything eg on a shelving beach, and that the public should do their own risk assessment, the PRE could give a false sense of security. The other side is that if you create something which encourages the public into an area eg a granite groyne, they should have access to PRE. Ian said that in South Hams they have PRE all over the place and he wondered how other areas dealt with the issue?</p> <p>Steve said if PRE is wrongly placed or is of the wrong type its more hazardous than having none at all. The best form of PRE is communication eg telephone. Ian has to pay someone to look after his PRE and to do regular checks when in fact the day after the checks they could be faulty.</p>	Rolo Deards & ALL

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	<p>Rolo asked Ian about the history of accidents and Ian said there were none but their Members do not want the PRE removed.</p> <p>Steve said the RNLI would be happy to undertake a third party risk assessment for them if needed.</p> <p>Rolo said he does risk assessments and if he deems it necessary removes the PRE if he feels it is in the wrong place, unsafe eg one on a cliff for fishermen. Phill said that a lot of PRE had been placed historically and that he has slowly started to say to Members that it is too dangerous/costly to check and asks for funding to be made available. Steve gave an example of Porthcothan where they had some PRE too far up a cliff to be of any use and the Council are now removing it.</p> <p>Phill said that some areas do require a compromise as most equipment is not on our land. Phill says that he has 2 people to check some equipment because of the risk assessment. Rolo said that it does come down to risk assessment and if he feels that something needs taking away or changing he does so as a suitably qualified person and does not consult his Members before doing so.</p> <p>The rope on the life rings always get tangled up so Rolo informed the group that he is in the process of having launch bags made up to keep the rope from getting tangled and he will bring a sample along to the next meeting. Richard Fedorowicz asked if it will be of a standard which everyone can say OK too and agree on and Rolo said it meets the requirements set under the guidelines via the RNLI. Richard went on to say that the Fire Brigade may be getting a 'Swift Water Rescue' mandate and he asked if they could be involved with the work of the PRE/Devon &amp; Cornwall Group rather than doubling up which Rolo felt would be in order. Steve informed Richard that the RNLI had worked with West Herefordshire Fire Brigade.</p>	
.5.	<p><u>NBSC</u></p> <p>Rolo attended the last National Beach Safety Council meeting and took forward a motion from the group that no-one was able to attend due to the time of day and venue. The Chairman of the NBSC told Rolo he felt the same way eg meetings in Birmingham on a Friday afternoon were not agreeable. The next NBSC meeting would be tagged onto ROSPA's meeting in March. Rolo said if we as a specific local group have any problems we can take it to their level for help.</p>	Rolo Deards
6.	<p><u>Coasteering</u></p> <p>Colin raised the question of coasteering and said most of it is carried out without permission and is difficult to police but as they are aware of it felt that some action was required to make sure the authority and its officers were protected. He said there is a minimum standard to carry out these activities and Lusty Glaze Adventure Centre were very good and had a Voluntary Code of Practice which had been established by Jeremy Griffiths, the Centre's owner. Colin would like to accredit groups who do it and recommend people are are Members of the Federation which is voluntary and something Jeremy Griffiths is involved with. Other groups do not look at safety measures such as the depth of sea, environment etc. There is one group operating in Carrick who is registered through ALLER (only under 18s registered).</p>	

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	<p>Steve mentioned the British Coasteering Federation which were mostly Newquay based groups, and said that there was also a UK and Scottish Coasteering Federation but that none of them have any official status. The RNLI and ROSPA are trying to help them to become a national governing body and is linked very closely with tombstoning. Steve said it is important to find a way to do this activity safely. He said safety advice is to not jump from heights. The Federation say 30ft is OK but the RNLI had an incident this year with a 15 year old girl who had jumped from that height but into only 4ft of water and had to be treated for spinal injuries, the group she was with was a member of the British Coasteering Federation. James Instance said that 7 deaths had occurred this year due to tombstoning.</p> <p>Steve said there is no Coasteering Leaders qualification so anyone can go out and do it and this must be changed. Most of the injuries happen on the way down as they hit cliffs etc. Phill felt they are losing a fighting battle when TV adverts depict people jumping off cliffs or use other extreme sports to sell everyday products such as Flora margarine. Steve said "don't do it" is not helping so need to get the safety advice out there about what to do/not to do. Rolo said holidaymakers may assume those operating are OK. North Cornwall's Byelaw may be able to be adapted to cover coasteering. Steve felt that some sort of reporting procedure is required so that groups and individuals can be struck off.</p> <p>James Instance said that the MCA are sticking with the advice that people should not tombstone or cliff jump. He queried how you would licence it which people all being different shapes, sizes, heights etc? Rolo said that Carrick feel the same. Steve went on to say that the RNLI are looking at it and may well say that coasteering should not involve cliff jumping.</p>	Steve Instance
7.	<p><u>Any Other Business</u></p> <p>1) James Instance referred to the jetski incident which occurred 18 months ago which had been prosecuted on navigational laws but the person won their appeal and was freed. The MCA's appeal has subsequently been refused. James referred to the Railway and Transport Act which states:</p> <p><b>The Railway and Transport Safety Act's alcohol offences, which apply to leisure sailors, are proposed to come into force next year. It will then be an offence for a leisure sailor to navigate a ship while his ability is impaired or to be over the prescribed limit. The limit, prescribed by the Act, is the same as that for drivers and indeed the process for testing will be the same. The offence will apply only when vessels are under way and then only to those people actively engaged in the control of the vessel. The proposal includes an exemption from the offence of exceeding the prescribed limit for leisure sailors navigating vessels incapable of exceeding 7 knots and under 7 metres in length. But there can be no exemption under the Act from the offence of impaired ability, which will apply to drugs as well as alcohol.</b></p> <p>Ian felt this would be of no use to them, however Phill said it would help in Penwith and gave an incident at Marazion as an example when the users of a jetski left their ski at Marazion beach, went to the pub and were obviously drunk but the Police were unable to do anything to help.</p>	

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	<p>James Instance said that this process would start if there was an accident, in the same way as with a road traffic accident. The Police and MCA's enforcement team will prosecute. The penalty is not known yet.</p> <p>Richard Fedorowicz asked if public awareness will help pick up on it and James confirmed that the RYA would be pushing the message out through its members, literature etc.</p> <p>2) Rolo said that he believed that the next edition of the magazine "Staying Alive" published by ROSPA has an article in it on coasteering.</p> <p>3) Phill informed the group that as of 1<sup>st</sup> January 2008 Penwith District Council were contracting the RNLI to provide its lifeguard cover and Kerrier District Council were also doing the same. Phill mentioned that East Devon were still in negotiation. Steve confirmed the RNLI were taking on about 40 more beaches next year.</p> <p>4) Richard Fedorowicz wanted to raise awareness of a newly formed group at Emergency Planning. It was deemed that there was a need for a Planning group to deal with large events like the Tall Ships or the Lifeguard 2010 event. It involves multi-agencies and not just the Blue Lights but also Highways, Social Services etc. Steve asked if they should still use the Event Notification Form in the Cornwall Events Guidance Pack and Richard confirmed this was still right.</p> <p>Sue asked if Richard could give her some information regarding the group because she was going to update the Events Pack in the New Year.</p> <p>Richard said that DEFRA were currently looking at the risks of Tsunamis and if we would have the ability to notify people. He said that an incident in Gibraltar could have a knock on effect in Mounts Bay. This is currently very much at DEFRA level and may come to nothing.</p> <p>6) Rolo agreed to take matters concerning coasteering and tombstoning to the next NBSC meeting.</p> <p>7) Rolo ended the meeting by thanking Colin for providing the lunch and meeting venue.</p>	<p>Richard Fedorowicz &amp; Sue Nicholls</p> <p>Rolo Deards</p>
7.	<p><u>Date of Next Meeting</u></p> <p>It was agreed that the next meeting would take place in Feb or April to avoid the Easter/School Holiday period. It was also agreed that the meeting venue would be at the RNLI base in Wadebridge.</p>	<p>Rolo Deards &amp; Sue Nicholls</p>

Meeting Closed : 12.15pm