

# DEVON & CORNWALL BEACH SAFETY GROUP

AGM meeting held at 11.00am on 15<sup>th</sup> March 2007 at RNLI Centre in Saltash

## MINUTES

### Attendees :

Rolo Deards (Chairman), Carrick D C	John Broad, RNLI
Ian Gibson, South Hams D C	Colin Ransley, Restormel B C
Richard Spindler, North Somerset Council	Shawn Corin, Torridge D C
Phill Drew, Penwith D C	
Sue Nicholls, (Secretariat), Penwith D C	

### Apologies :

Roy Lawford, (Vice Chairman) Kerrier D C	Richard Fedorowicz, Emergency Planning
Richard Allen, Kerrier D C	John James, Emergency Planning
Andy Philips, East Devon D C	James Ortiz, North Cornwall D C
Steve Instance, RNLI	Chris James, Caradon D C
James Instance, MCA	Tracey Higgs, Teinbridge D C
Simon Rabett, MCA	

REF:	ISSUES DISCUSSED	ACTION BY
1.	<p><u>Nominations for Chairman, Vice-Chairman and Secretariat</u></p> <p>The only nominations received were from James Ortiz prior to the meeting for the existing post holders to remain the same for 2007. Following a unanimous vote this was agreed and therefore Rolo Deards is Chairman, Roy Lawford is Vice-Chairman and Sue Nicholls is Secretariat.</p>	
2.	<p><u>Notes of the meeting held on 9<sup>th</sup> November 2006.</u></p> <p>The notes were agreed.</p>	Rolo Deards & Sue Nicholls
	<p><u>Matters Arising</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <u>Byelaws</u></li> </ul> <p>Shawn gave out copies of the Byelaws they use in his District although they were no longer appropriate they would be useful for information.</p> <p>Rolo had heard the day before the meeting that during the summer new £100 fines would be introduced under the Clean Neighbourhood/Environment Act. Shawn said they had yet to adopt them in his area.</p>	

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	<p>Phill stated that Penwith were currently consulting on new Dog Control Orders in Penwith which would replace the existing Cornwall County Council dog bans on beaches. Shawn said that Torridge are waiting to see how they develop and whether they have to be specific. Richard was currently being trained at present so that he would be able to enforce fines for litter and dogs as well as other Ranger staff in his area. It is an offence under the new Act, with a £75 fine, if a person refuses to give their name and address when asked and the Police can be called. Richard said that North Somerset Council have just banned dogs from the main parts of their beaches all year. He hopes their new powers will be in force by 1<sup>st</sup> May, however he feels it is going to make things very difficult which is similar to Porthowan where people did not like the dog ban being imposed because of the Blue Flag. Colin said it was possible to tie up with the Blue Flag beaches. In Carrick the area has become a minefield when the Blue Flag season ends. Phill said could be self paying and suggested contacting Legal Departments to see if can adopt for other areas. Phill said Penwith's Dog Control Orders had to be consulted on but likely to be in force for July. Shawn said that under the new Act the number of dogs walked at any one time can be restricted and the ownership of a beach is immaterial as once a Local Authority impose a ban and has consulted on it then legally it can be done.</p>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <u>Cornwall County Council – Single Issue Panel</u></li> </ul> <p>The latest news on the White Paper was that it was likely to go with the potential for everything to go to County. In Somerset they are looking at amalgamating 5 Districts to become one County. North Somerset is not affected. In Devon it looks like County will go and the Districts will become a Unitary. No-one seen any reports as yet.</p>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <u>Training course - Practical Skills for Coastal Zone Management</u></li> </ul> <p>Rolo said that the course was on the back burner but that he would keep the group informed.</p>	Rolo Deards
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <u>Surf Hire Safety Trial</u></li> </ul> <p>John reported that the trial was being extended this year to some other areas who wanted to take it up. John explained that it was still a voluntary scheme aimed at promoting Best Practice. There would be a final report produced in October.</p> <p>Phill asked John if they had contacted the Health and Safety Executive over the incident at Watergate but John reported that they were waiting for an inquest.</p>	Steve Instance/John Broad
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <u>Surf Schools</u></li> </ul> <p>Rolo said he had not done the letter to schools but was still willing to do so if the group wanted him too. Phill said he had contacted the LEA who have thanked him for doing so and expressed concerns but will wait and see if anything improves. Shawn asked if anyone charges schools? He said they have just started charging a £500 licence fee and they also ask for CRB checks and risk assessments before a licence is given. John said that North Cornwall were doing the same. Torridae lease the beach from</p>	ALL

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	<p>Crown. Colin said that trading areas are an issue. National Trust and Duchy charge also. The Solicitor at Torridge feels that there is a Duty of Care and John said that the Council is taking a responsible attitude.</p> <p>Phill said that in Penwith it is getting to the stage where landowners/interested parties are working together and that Penwith D C have had sting operations in some car parks to catch people trading. There is an issue of people accepting business over the phone and via websites and it is difficult to disprove that it is not just friends "having fun". The BSA are keen to clamp down on this and they have a schools scheme which means they are already checked and they also enforce. Phill would like to see more enforcement. John said he had looked into the issue when out with Restormel's Health &amp; Safety Officer and under the ALLER Regs surfing was not included although canoeing was. It was commented that there have been a series of surfing tragedies but as yet nothing had been done.</p>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="239 730 387 763">• <u>Horses</u></li> </ul> <p>Phill expressed huge concerns regarding horses and there was a possible case being taken involving Hayle Harbour Company. The British Horse Society have become involved recently over plans to try and control access to beaches during busy periods. Shawn commented that he had experienced problems in his area with horse riders thinking they can do whatever they like.</p>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="239 1032 496 1066">• <u>Missing Persons</u></li> </ul> <p>There was a general discussion amongst the group on how each area deal with missing persons on the beach. John said the RNLI always ring the Coastguard and they then call the Police. Phill said that at a recent Police meeting the Police want to be informed first but the MCA say they need to know first? Colin said it is asking one person to make a choice and John felt that the MCA should take on that role. All lifeguard facilities declare to the MCA. Rolo said they should get their procedures in place. Phill commented that sometimes the helicopter comes across but the lifeguards are the last to know. James Instance is starting to log what happens. The Ambulance Service have it sorted and do do it. It is improving but working relationships need to develop. John is having a pre-season meeting with the MCA and Phill said it would be good to have some information following that meeting. The RNLI do a group sign on and Rolo said letting the MCA know daily is a reminder to them.</p>	John Broad
4.	<p><u>Public Rescue Equipment</u></p> <p>Rolo said this item was originally raised by Steve Took from South Hams D C 2 years ago and a working group was subsequently set up of which Rolo has been a part of. A draft copy of the PRE guide is due out soon and is based on scientific research. Rolo said it has gone very well. The guidance book will be launched in May and will be presented to the International body in June. It is purely risk assessment led but certain guidelines will advise eg steep shelving beaches. Rolo did not think there would be too much work for areas to bring existing PRE provisions uptodate.</p>	Rolo Deards

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	<p>The life rings have recommended sizes and also guidance on how much line of rope should be used on throwing aids etc. Phill asked if the group have chosen a size of rope and Rolo said its between 9mm – 13mm, generally 8mm is used, although in Carrick they use 10mm. Rolo said the guidance is slightly determined by weight and grip.</p> <p>The length of rope to be used is generally 25m plus the length of drop as well. Phill commented that the Glasdon housings only just hold the rope now. Rolo said the group were also looking at suitable housings/launching facilities which will be included in the guidance. John said most of the incidents go wrong when the person tries to pull the casualty back in and the rope gets snagged on rocks etc. Rolo said that it does stress that the rope is not for lifting people. Rolo said he would go back and check as the size of the rope was raised at the last meeting. Some of the group present felt that vandalism would still be an issue and with better rope this would attract a different kind of vandal. The research has been carried out by RNLI's technicians based at Poole. Phill asked if there were any private landowners on the group? Rolo said that there were none and Phill followed by saying that 99% of beaches/land in Penwith were owned privately and not by the local authority. The National Trust will get the guidance given to them and Rolo received calls following the Mullion incident. Phill said that he had real issues of PRE at Logan Rock and is having discussions with the National Trust over their Duty of Care as the PRE is on their land but too dangerous for Council staff to inspect/maintain and Penwith have threatened to remove it if the issue is not resolved.</p> <p>Rolo said the National Trust do provide PRE where they are forced too eg at Carkeel Waterway. PRE is always a last resort and Rolo made it clear that the guidance is not a “must do it guide”. ROSPA have looked at it very carefully and the wording will be appropriate and Rolo feels it will be very useful for people. Phill said it will be good to standardise the equipment. John said in Ireland they teach children how to use PRE and that its useful to include this in school talks. Richard asked about the guidelines and how often equipment should be checked, Rolo said that lifeguarded beaches should be daily and other areas done weekly in season, monthly during winter. Phill said that Penwith already do this now.</p> <p>Phill felt that the guidance must be carefully worded and should be based on level of risk, previous incidents and risk assessments etc. Phill asked if it will specifically say lifeguarded beaches are seasonal and Rolo confirmed that it would. The NBSC do give out daily log sheets that the RNLI use. There will be trials on log sheets during the summer and are based on the 3 examples that Rolo took from the Devon &amp; Cornwall Beach Safety Group previously. Carrick have unique marking on their perry buoys so know they belong to them and use the system of removing a letter on the buoy. Rolo said he was not sure that the draft would go to everyone before the final document comes out.</p> <p>The perry buoys would be sized between 18 – 24 inches and designed for a person to hold onto rather than actually getting in it. The provision of equipment on flat beaches may be unnecessary eg middle of Perranporth beach and only needed at the edge nearer the cliffs. The empathise will be on signage and communications. Phill asked if ENCAMS were involved and Rolo said that they were. The ENCAMS representative was going to take it back and if adopted by the ILS then they would adopt it too.</p>	<p>Rolo Deards</p>

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	<p>Phill asked what the methods of getting the person back was eg pulling or lifting? Rolo said he would go back and ask about methods of rescue. John said a member of the public is likely to panic and try and pull the casualty and it was suggested that maybe on every site there should be a rope ladder. Rolo reiterated what he had said previously in that the equipment was purely designed for rescue and not for lifting. The idea of a rope is that it can be pulled back and thrown again if necessary. The equipment is as a last resort to bide time until further help arrives.</p>	Rolo Deards
5.	<p><u>NBSC</u></p> <p>Rolo asked if any of the group were going to the next NBSC and no-one was able to go. Phill said it was a real concern that no-one from the South West was going and the group felt that the meeting being held late on a Friday is not good for most people.</p> <p>Rolo reminded the group that the National Water Safety Forum was on 4<sup>th</sup> April.</p>	Rolo Deards
6.	<p><u>Any Other Business</u></p> <p>1) Sue handed out the RNLI incident statistics from the last meeting as she had been unable to email them out to everyone. John said the figures are recorded by incidents and also how many were rescued. Carrick's are consistent with the previous year.</p> <p>2) John showed the latest Environmental Health leaflet regarding streams and said if anyone required further supplies that he had some he could make available after the meeting. The working group was now disbanded but there has been a factsheet of frequently asked questions produced that lifeguards may find useful regarding water testing, algal blooms and jelly fish etc.</p> <p>3) Colin said that someone in the North had taken sand off his land and was putting it back on the beach but he got prosecuted for fly tipping. At Porthtowan the local Council do remove sand from a local road. Question was asked if it comes off the beach and onto a private land who owns it? Phill said the Environment Agency say it should go back to the beach. On Porthmeor beach the sand is removed at times of big sand banks. John said that Bournemouth have just imported lots of sand in order to lengthen Boscombe.</p> <p>4) Shawn asked if anyone was doing the Quality Coast Awards this year? Colin and Richard both confirmed they have withdrawn from the scheme. Phill confirmed that Penwith were not pursuing them. Rolo said that other groups such as BRADA and BMF do not like the scheme either. Shawn said they are going through it but having to jump through a lot of hoops even though they do have Blue Flags. Colin asked Visit Cornwall and local Tourist Information Centres for feedback and most people do not ask about flag awards but want to know where is safest beach and where to park their car etc. The potential loss of Blue Flags causes more interest from the public/media. At Torridge and Carrick the Tourism Departments apply for the Blue Flag Awards. Rolo suggested a Star rating system may be more useful and easier for people to understand and John said that there used to be a Star Fish Award some years ago.</p>	John Broad

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	<p>5) John informed the group that the RNLI were running a scheme with the Police and would be training a PCSO to be at Perranporth to act as a lifeguard and a lifeguard from Fistral was being trained to act as a PCSO. After the summer both people will go back to work in the community. It is hoped that some of the training will rub off on other lifeguards dealing with difficult people. Richard said he gets terrible disorder issues on their beaches.</p> <p>6) Rolo ended the meeting by thanking John and the RNLI for providing the lunch and meeting venue.</p>	
7.	<p><u>Date of Next Meeting</u></p> <p>It was agreed that the next meeting would take place in November after the season and that the venue would either be at Saltash again Newquay.</p>	Rolo Deards & Sue Nicholls

Meeting Closed : 12.55pm