

The Radio Amateurs; Emergency Network

Registered in England and Wales number 2771954; registered charity number 1047725

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held in Cambridge Masonic Hall, Bateman Street, Cambridge CB2 1NA on Saturday 29 October 2016 at 3.15 pm

Present: Cathy Clark G1GQJ (chairman), Roger Alexander 2E0WWZ, Paul Baker G1ZBW, Keith Batchelor G0WEN, George Bichard M0GXB, Colin Bowman M0NLP, John Breen M0XZL, Colin Brooks G1IGA, Jason Bull M0JPB, Tina Bull, Alastair Cameron G0EAC, Brian Clark G1ECE, Ray Clark G8GQJ, Paul Davies M0LOM, Peter Davies G0KQA, Allan Doe G4NJR, Brian Dooks G0RHI, Linda Dooks RAY01357, Charlie Duncan GM6MUZ, Andy Evans G6RIB, Hazel Evans M3TKA, Keith Gaunt G7CIY, Dave Green M0HPV, Martin Green G4PMG, Trevor Groves G4KUJ, Gill Hampson G0JIL, Mike Hampson G8RXB, Phill Hills G7JRV, Adam Hogg G8UMX, Philip Hosey MI0MSO, Alan Jones M0JSA, Sarah Jones M6ISJ, Anne Keen G7DWN, Russell Keen G7OOW, David Kennett G7CMB, Don Kirkwood G3YQO, Irene P Langtree G0KBA, John Martin G8XLB, Christian Maxwell M0MXL, Julie Maxwell 2E0JLY, Chris Morcom G3VEH, Dave Morton G4LQT, Jon Mossman G7JJK, Greg Mossop G0DUB, Lisa Mossop M0LSA, Sean Murphy M1AHS, Ted Oram G1NUO, Len Paget GM0OWX, John Palmer G1CXE, Steve Pritchard M0EDR, Tom Reilly G0NSY, Christopher Sayles 2E0CVV, Roland Scarce G7RMQ, Ian Shepherd G4 EVK, John Slater G6EUO, David A D Smith G8IDL, Ian Somers G3ZHX, Bernie Stevens G8YUP, Roland Taylor M0BDB, Graham Tew G7WFK, Peter Tew M1CNL, John Thomson G8SYD, Peter Thomson GM1XEA, David Thomas GW0RUH, Stuart Walker G7HIF, Phil Webber G8KLC, Ann Webber G1PRM, Adam Webster G1UAF, Max White M0VNG, Gill Whitehead G3YLJ, Mike Whitehead M0DVX, and Howard Winter G1BYY.

The chairman formally welcomed members to the meeting.

1. Apologies for absence

Apologies were received from Gerald Brady G0UFI, John Cannell G7OAI, Martin Chapple G8XQS, Alan Grime G7EQK, Peter Hammond G7CNX, Mike Higlett G6WTM, Tina Hills G7JZW, Alan Hopkinson G8OJQ, Ray Hughes G0FTI, Chris Kirby G4FZN, Pauline Kirby G8HQW, John Long M1ENA, Bob Owen G7PNG, Graham Pemberton G7NEH, Andy Ripley M0DCD, Graham Sawyer 2E0SSL, Jeff Snowling G1DYN, John Stacey G0VPJ, Lisa Walker 2E0VLL, Tony Westbrook G7NKJ, Ted Wharton G4NUY, Martin Williams G4GRS and Iain Young G7III.

2. Minutes of the Annual General Meeting of the Company held on 24 October 2015

One correction was noted: Phil Webber stated that "Extraordinary" in the header should read "Annual".

The minutes were proposed by Max White and seconded by John Palmer. The proposal was carried: 70 members voted in favour, none against, and 21 abstained.

3. Trustees' report and hear current situation

In her report to the meeting the chairman started thanking Roy Harold MBE, Chief Fire Officer of Norfolk Fire and Rescue for his keynote address to the Convention, Greg Mossop G0DUB for presenting the interim report on the recent RAYNET, David Smith G8IDL for co-ordinating the arrangements for the AGM, the Cambridgeshire group for the provision of talk-in, the staff of the Cambridge Masonic Hall for their help, and Adam Webster, ZC4.

Membership has remained stable, with 1650 of 24th October in 98 groups. 26 new members were welcomed in the year, but some very active members died. Probably the best known of these was Beatrice Jebb G6AJF from Cleveland who was a familiar figure at AGMs and who, along with her husband John, worked with groups across the North of England and was also active further afield on the LDWA 100 events; and David Cadman G8UVE of West Yorkshire who helped with Richmond and Keighley Group events and had associations in south west Scotland. The chairman also noted that the membership ageing, with just under 500 under 50 but 1150 over that age.

There were also over 250 enquiries about membership on the website of which 65 were enquiries for RSGB groups. It is frustrating that some groups do not bother to follow up enquiries and as a result some enquirers lose interest and volunteer elsewhere. There are also some “time-wasters” who do not join once they realise the level of commitment required. There is something to be said for groups weeding those who are not committed, but in order to maintain viable and active groups, potential members must be encouraged to become actively involved.

Event requests are forwarded to the group controller direct or via the ZC. While some of these are from previous organisers, many organisers have been recommended to contact RAYNET because they have been involved in successful events elsewhere. The most common reasons for are either “poor mobile phone coverage” or “unreliable existing communications”. Often these events are in difficult terrain and present a technical challenge. There also appears to be an increase in event “assists” this where neighbouring groups are called upon to help resource large events or those covering a much wider area than that covered by a single group.

The Committee of Management has met four times during 2016, and there is a further meeting in two weeks’ time. The volume of work undertaken by the zonal co-ordinators, as Directors of the Company and trustees of the Charity, not to mention their “constituency” work is staggering. In addition to this, they have also taken on other areas of responsibility.

On the Emergency Planning front, a RAYNET presentation was given to TSG Chairs in April at Ambition 2016 at Olympia at the request of Cabinet Office. The presentation gave an overview of the organisation and requested that TSGs examine their local risk registers for ways in which RAYNET might be able to assist. They were also tasked to inform RAYNET of future communications provision they would like RAYNET to provide, with FEEDNET being given as an example.

RAYNET also attended the Emergency Services Show at the NEC last month. The theme this year was “RAYNET interoperability and flexibility”. Liaison with Civil Contingencies Secretariat has continued, as has liaison with British Red Cross (BRC). Trevor Groves represents RAYNET on the Voluntary Sector Civil Protection Working Group and also represents that group at any Home Office ESN information forums together with colleagues from Red Cross and the RNLI.

Resilience Direct has a growing number of subscribers. RAYNET has an information page, giving an overview of the organisation and zonal contact details, and also has details on the organisation in the Telecoms Sub Group Chairs’ area. An increasing number of RAYNET members are requesting access to RD.

Our book-keeper Lisa Mossop M0LSA deals with the financial records of the organisation and provides comprehensive reports to each Committee of Management meeting. She also produces the financial statements for the Annual Report and liaises with the Independent Examiner.

RAYNET news is emailed out on a Friday morning to around 1400 members. However, every week some email “bounces” and members are urged to ensure that the contact details held on the database are correct. Whilst HF news transmission has ceased, other on-air HF activities continue through the regular weekly RAYNET-HF nets.

RAY~Link continues to be published. Editing a newsletter is no easy task, and the chairman thanked Don Kirkwood G3YQO for making each edition interesting and members for continuing to supply articles.

Mail order of RAYNET Supplies continues to thrive and electronic banking is proving popular with members. A copy of the completed supplies form is still required, either by post or email.

Registrations are handled by Jon Mossman GW7JJK, with a quick turnaround on ID cards. Groups are able to submit their paperwork and photos as scanned copies and payment is accepted via internet banking.

The Network organised a third Spring Convention in Cardiff, which was reported in both the Annual Report and RAY~Link. The focus was on Risk Assessment. Another Convention arranged for 11th March 2017 in Oxfordshire.

On the technical side, PBR continues to be popular, with the issue to groups of permits for the Business Radio (Simple UK) licence regime under The Network's licence. The reasons for its use are often inter-operability with a range of other users outside those listed as CAT 1 and 2 Responders. The Network retains the policy of issuing talk-through permits to groups in order to provide statistical data on frequency usage, which forms part of the report to Ofcom which the Network continues to submit. This information has proved invaluable in the past for use in discussions over band planning, but it is important that groups submit reports after talk-through usage, especially if interference has been experienced. The Technical team launched a technical survey in August, the interim results from which were presented by Greg Mossop G0DUB earlier in the day. The survey was to be extended to RSGB groups until early 2017 with the final report presented at the Spring Convention.

Huge strides have been made in the development of a National Training programme under the leadership of Charlie Duncan GM6MUZ, assisted by Roger Alexander and Gill Whitehead, who had made themselves available prior to the AGM. The team announced the first of a number of Train the Trainers weekends at Lansdown at the end of November.

Liaison with the RSGB has continued, both through the Joint Working Group and the Emergency Communications Committee and with the Society itself. The Network has been encouraged to send articles for publication in RadCom.

There has long been a desire to see a single unified organisation, and at the meeting the Chairman of the network and Nick Henwood, President of the RSGB signed the new agreement between the RSGB and RAYNET-UK. The Chairman also thanked Len Paget and the rest of the RSGB Board for their support and the members of the RSGB Emergency Communications Committee. The transition for RSGB and independent groups to RAYNET-UK was due to begin on 1st January 2017, with existing members of the organisation being transferred automatically and a transition period during which the existing Committee of Management will stay in post, joined by co-opted members from the ECC. Following this, there will be elections held for all posts on the management committee.

135 long service certificates were also presented to members as a small token of the Network's appreciation for their loyalty and hard work. They are awarded to those who have recorded in excess of fifteen years of membership. Eight were awarded for 40 years' service: to Dick Jeffries G4KAR, Steve Sims G8NFZ, Eric Walton G4FSN, Phil Webber G8KLC, Professor Martin Harrison G3USF, Martin Hobson GM8KPH, Dave Hall G8VZT and Iain Strachan GM4FLP. Two were awarded for 45 years' service, to John Lockwood G3XLL and Ken Walker G8DIR.

Acceptance of the report was proposed by Peter Davies and seconded by Alan Langtree; it was carried with 84 members voting in favour, one voting against and 12 abstaining.

4. Accounts for the year ended 31 March 2016

Acceptance of the accounts was proposed by Martin Green and seconded by John Palmer. It was carried with 89 members voting in favour, none voting against and 13 abstentions.

5. Open forum

Brian Dooks said that the LDWA 100 walk takes place in North Yorkshire from 26 to 28 May 2017, and asked for volunteers. He added that there were 17 checkpoints on the event.

Philip Hosey had brought a Hytera RD625 lightweight repeater to the meeting and offered members a chance to look at it; he said that RAYNET in Northern Ireland had adopted DMR late in 2015. In reply to members' questions, he said that there had been no problems in moving to DMR and that they have used the repeater on PMR frequencies. In response to a question on cost, he answered that it had cost £1100 without a duplexer; the duplexer fits on the side. Adam Webster added that there is a backpack version, which is available at twice the price. Another member asked how RAYNET NI used it in blackspots; Mr Hosey replied that they had used it in tandem on events with a cross-band repeater.

Peter Thompson wished to record his thanks to the Joint Working Group for its efforts in connection with the unification of RAEN and RSGB RAYNETs.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 4.20 pm.