

SAFETY ON THE SEA GROUP

Tuesday 4th October 2005

MINUTES



THOSE ATTENDING:

| | | | |
|----------------|------------------|----------------|---------|
| Peter Chennell | RNLI (Chairman) | Peter Cornall | RoSPA |
| Michelle Walsh | RNLI (Secretary) | Simon Jinks | RYA |
| Peter Brown | MCA | Kevin Franklin | SEAFISH |
| Nigel Saw | BMF | Kevin Mowat | UKLHMA |

1. Welcome / Introductions

PC welcomed everyone and thanked Simon Jinks and the RYA for hosting today's meeting and welcomed Kevin Mowat from the UK Leisure Harbour Masters Association to the group, for his benefit all introduced themselves and gave a brief description of their role within the group.

2. Apologies

Apologies were received from: -

| | |
|---------------|-------|
| Susan Rooke | MCA |
| Peter Bradley | RLSS |
| David Walker | RoSPA |

3. Minutes of last meeting

Minutes of 11th July 2005 were reviewed and adopted as true.

4. Matters Arising (not on agenda/from previous meeting)

LPG Propulsion

This matter has been raised after PB left the last meeting, his response was that his understanding of the issue was that vessels in question were not coded, which was why they were banned. NS replied that British Water Ski Federation (BWSF) were not aware that they needed to be coded! PB quoted from BWSF minutes and questioned why BMF had not been represented at the meeting. PB reported that a paper needed to be submitted by BWSF for coding consideration. Everyone agreed that LPG's were in fact safer than PWC's and these were professional ski boats. It was not understood why there were considered safe inland but not at sea? Now that there was an understanding of this ruling was this an issue for this group? It was decided that it wasn't and the matter was formally dropped.

Lifejackets

Again this matter had been discussed without PB present. PB brought to the meeting draft minutes of the 'Safety Equipment Advisory Committee (SEAC)', which has been set up to deal with the confusion surrounding the issue of which lifejacket should be worn for the different types of activities. This is the first time some of the SoSWG were aware of this committee and wanted to know who the committee report to, eg NWSF? Are the group happy for this issue to be handled by the SEAC? There was some concern as to was sitting on the committee. Simon Jinks confirmed that he has been invited to the next meeting and would report back at the group.

Action: PB to check with committee and email copy of minutes, to be attached.

Agenda Item: SJ to report to next meeting

Co-ordinated Message

PC was concerned that the group still had not decided on a co-ordinated message. The MCA's, MT6 is a perfect opportunity for the group to get on board and be pro-active. Machinery failure is a real issue for everyone; PC quoted RNLi figures, out of all services to craft over 30% were because of Machinery Failure. Everyone agreed that lots of money is wasted due to rescues of people who have Machinery Failure. The group was asked for ideas. Several were discussed. The matter was brought up again that data we have is not very specific. We could wait another two years until we have more information relating to the type of failure, e.g. Blocked fuel line, dead engine or just poor maintenance, but everyone agreed we needed to do something now. The question was raised as to who we were directing the campaign to, the user or maintenance industry? It was agreed that it is the end user that is predominately responsible for the maintenance of his/her boat.

One of the slogans suggested was 'know your boat capability', some boats are perfectly suited to inland activities they may not be suitable for going to sea. It was agreed that education is essential. RNLi do have as part of the five key messages 'Check you engine and fuel' and plans for RNLi Road shows next year is to have an engine mock-up on the stand and demos on how to maintain your engine and co-ordinators being available to answer questions.

Other suggestions for a message, 'Look after your kit', 'you need your engine', 'don't call us call them', brainstorming continued.

SEAFISH initiative for 2006 is already in the pipeline to offer a free course to fisherman on a voucher scheme, initially it will be the MCA approved Diesel course, but they are at present developing a 5 day course, similar to the MCA course. Because fisherman do not like attending courses, due to the loss of revenue while they are not working, another suggestion was taking a road show down to the harbour and catching the fishing boats on their return and offering on-shore training.

The MCA are hosting an open dialogue prevention seminar 1st & 2nd March 2006, to share with everyone what they are doing with regards to MT6, more information will be available soon.

Action: PB to keep group informed of venue

PB also suggested that when a disaster happens and reported in the press, we should use the situation to press home examples of 'if they had.. Properly maintained their engine or ... had a VHF radio this would have greatly assisted the rescue' etc...

PB also quoted that he was aware that Sea Start recorded 1,600 rescues this year where people had broken down in addition to figures being quoted around the table.

Another suggestion was a code of practice. If you see someone in difficulty offer a tow, with a slogan adopted 'don't call the lifeboat, ask for a tow'!

KM is aware that there are companies that offer a towing service and who charge, perhaps if we can encourage more people to use services like this, instead of calling the lifeboat, they would appreciate the cost of the service *and* their engines, with an emphasis on the cost of an engine service outweighing the cost of a tow!

For the "Urban Navy", the slogan could be 'Think ahead', its too late if we are giving the message out on the slipway, because of the distance people travel to go boating, this is not going to deter them from entering the water.

Because of the bad press surrounding Jet Ski's, and the new regulations, Jet-Skis are regularly stopped on slipways to produce insurance and registration documents. Because we know they are regulated, it easier to police, but we do not ask the same from the leisure boat sector. Do we now need to do this? Discussion continued.

It was questioned whether we take a soft or hard approach even going as far as suggesting MOT's for boats? This was discussed and thought that this would create a need for some sort of central registration for boats similar to cars, this issue has already been debated many times before and thought that those people that would not mind registering their boats, were not necessarily the ones we are trying to reach.

It was suggested that the SoSWG should have their own stand at the major boat shows (LIBS & SIBS), promoting the group to prove a united front on key messages.

What would be the end result of the campaign, what does each group want to see as a result?

RYA - More competent boat users.

MCA – Prevention and to reduce the number of rescues due to machinery failure

RNLI – Changing attitudes and behaviour

BMF – Properly maintained engines, boat builders working to comply with Recreational Craft Directive essential requirements and chandlers being trained to give better advice.

KM – Boat users being educated in order to make correct decisions

The booklet is the RYA Diesel Engine Handbook

SJ suggested that instead of highlighting one point of safety we should develop a safety ethos based co-ordinated message.

PB, MCA keen to support any initiative in achieving MT6 and is open to suggestions.

Action: It was agreed that we needed some help from a marketing point of view, BMF & RYA Marketing Departments to talk to each other and JS & NS to report back at next meeting.

Disposal of Old Flares – PB feedback from NWSF 12th July 2005

The matter was raised and the following statement was read out by PB

From Head of SAR – June 2005

Our policy remains the same as ever ie Coastguard Stations will accept small amounts of time expired pyrotechnics (TEPs) from NRPVs, small FVs and RNLI. We are unable to take TEPs from commercial organisations eg Harbour Masters, Chandleries, Marinas, etc as these are usually large amounts for which we do not have the stowage. RN EODU have given an undertaking to continue to collect from Coastguard Stations because of the small amounts concerned but can no longer collect from commercial organisations because of the amounts involved. Commercial organisations have been advised to make their own arrangements for the collection and disposal of TEPs using specialist hazardous waste disposal companies or the pyrotechnic manufacturers who, in some cases, will collect TEPs.

See also MGN 287.

There was still concern from the group that this issue was a real problem and still needed some immediate action. PC to raise the matter again at the next NWSF Tuesday 18th October 2005, and report back update and actions.

A suggestion was a partnership with Chandlers to offer a discount on new flares when out of date ones are returned.

If there are no safe means of disposing of all old flares this may discourage people from actually buying them in the first place, or holding on to out of date flares not realising the dangers!

Action & Agenda Item: PC to raise issue at next meeting and report back to group

VHF Radios

This item was raised at the last meeting looking at positive ways to encourage more people to use VHF radios rather than mobile phones, discussion continued. There could be a number of reasons that stop people from buying/using VHF radios, training and confidence of using the equipment. But the message should not be too negative, as sometimes this is the only method the boater has available, we do not want to deter them from calling to assistance because they have read somewhere that you shouldn't use a mobile!

PB confirmed that CHIRP have discussed this issue and have set out guidelines warning of the dangers of using a mobile while berthing. But more clarification is needed as when it is acceptable to call for help using a mobile. The UK SAR group has draft paper addressing policies for the use of mobiles.

Action: PB to see if it is possible to see a draft

Dedicated Weather Channel

PC has spoken to Peter Bradley, RNLI who sits on the Marine Radio Communications Advisory Technical Committee. This has been debated with Ofcom, but unfortunately, it is a question of who will fund it and manage. Sponsorship is an option, then it turns into a commercial weather station. There are spare channels available. MCA does have the infrastructure if Ofcom were receptive to this? Part of the problem will be getting an up to date forecast if the 05:00 is still being repeated at 09:00 then it will be 4 hours out of date.

Action: PC to draft a letter encouraging more research into offering this service to Peter Bradley and Ofcom.

Future of Joint Publications

How might the group connect with new boat users?

As discussed in previous meeting, it is people that buy boats at around £1,000 and under that pose the greatest risk, from sources such as Ebay or Exchange and Mart. A suggestion is to put a PDF link to download a 'bill of sale' with a link to group websites, offering training and safety literature, with a code added to the PDF so that this type of initiative can be monitored. RYA and BMF have their own standard bills of sale to compare.

Action: RYA & BMF to compare 'Bills of Sale', and bring an example to the next meeting

Any Other Business

MCA's Rescue Boat Code – is this a voluntary or mandatory code? Any persons under the age of 18 are not permitted to operate a rescue boat. NS did not realise there was an option, discussion continued, as we have kids as young as 13 driving boats. The legislation of clarified as 'only boats that are operated for the good of the public'.

5. Verbal Updates

RNLI Update

Peter Chennell

The Sea Safety department, which had hitherto been a fundraising and communications activity has now been transferred to the Operations Department as part of a new department called "Prevention". The opportunities presented by this arrangement will allow it to be much more effective in the delivery of Sea Safety messages.

It is in the early planning stages of a new resource which will be a combined booklet and CD Rom; the booklet will give top line Sea Safety information with the CD Rom allowing the user to find out in more depth about the safety issues covered in the booklet.

The lifejacket clinic at SIBs was a resounding success and it is proposed to repeat this at LIBS.

Machinery failure accounts for 30% of all launches to pleasure craft (as it did ten years ago!) and RNLI Sea Safety will be campaigning on this issue next year. Happily this coincides with MCA's MT6.

MCA Update

Peter Brown

As attached papers

RYA Update

Simon Jinks

We are developing new charts and electronic training plotter for our shorebased courses plus also updating the Sea Survival syllabus/book and the Radar syllabus and book. The Green Blue environmental plan has developed a book of cruising routes to aid the sensible placement of alternative energy points such as wind and tide generators.

BMF Update

Nigel Saw

We are working on a boat builder's verification scheme that, if taken up by the trade, would result in boatyards being inspected and verification given that they are complying with all the necessary regulations, in particular that leisure craft are being built to fully comply with the Recreational Craft Directive essential requirements. One aspect of this is to ensure a new craft has an operator's manual supplied detailing the safety aspects on the boat.

SEAFISH Update

Kevin Franklin
As attached paper

RoSPA Update

P Cornall/David Walker

11 Date, time and location of next meeting

Wednesday 14th December, 2005, 11:00am, MCA, Spring Place, 105 Commercial Road, Southampton, SO15 1EG. Directions www.mcga.gov.uk.

Distribution - Members of the Group:

MCA
RYA
BMF
RLSS (UK)
SLSA (GB)
RoSPA
Irish Coast Guard
SEAFISH
NWSF Website