



## **National Water Safety Forum**

### **Watersports Advisory Group**

**Notes of meeting held on 22 February 2006, at CCPR, London**

#### **Attendees:**

|                   |                  |   |
|-------------------|------------------|---|
| <b>Chair</b>      | James Stevens    | Royal Yachting Association                    |
| <b>Vice Chair</b> | Jim Watson       | British Sub Aqua Club                         |
|                   | Roger Barnard    | Sport England                                 |
|                   | Norman Brook     | British Triathlon Association                 |
|                   | David Walker     | Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents |
|                   | Stuart Ward      | Amateur Rowing Association                    |
|                   | Anna Blannin     | National School Sailing Association           |
|                   | Peter Brown      | Maritime and Coastguard Agency                |
|                   | Charlotte Edward | CCPR and Secretariat                          |

#### **1. Welcome and instructions**

James Stevens (JS) welcomed everyone to the meeting and in particular Peter Brown from the Maritime and Coastguard Agency.

#### **2. Apologies for absence**

Apologies for absence had been received from Simon Goodey, Adrian Lole, Penny Matkin, Richard Ward and Peter Cornall.

#### **3. Notes of the previous meeting**

The notes of the previous meeting held on the 8 November 2005 were agreed as an accurate record of the meeting, save for a few minor spelling amendments. It was agreed that these notes would be amended and then David Walker would add these to the Forum website.

#### **4. Matters arising from the notes**

##### **4.1 Report from the National Water Safety Forum Meeting**

David Walker (DW) provided an update on the recent Government Inter-departmental Group (GIG). DW informed the meeting that the main issues that arose from that meeting were:

- Beach life-guarding
- Statistics – INREM
- ISRM Swimming policy

- Department for Health's attendance
- DW informed the meeting that the next main Forum meeting will take place on the 17 March 2006

#### **4.2 Report from the Information Group Meeting**

Stuart Ward (SW) presented and discussed a paper which outlined the key issues from the most recent information group meeting. The key issues at this meeting were:

- Feedback from GIG meeting
- Members updates:
  - INREM
  - Poseidon (swimming pool underwater detection of drowning bodies) and free swimming
  - Maritime and Coastguard Agency data
  - Swimming ability and affects on watersports
- Publication of water related fatality information

Following the update, the meeting discussed the issue of swimming ability as a requirement for participation in watersports and how each NGB guidance differed on this issue. The meeting fully supported the Government requirement that all children should learn to swim at school and that this should include water competence and confidence.

The Information Group had suggested that it would be useful for the Forum to have all the different guidelines from NGBs regarding swimming ability on the Forum website. DW confirmed that he would put together a matrix and circulate this to the group to gain this information.

**Action: DW to circulate a matrix for NGB's to complete regarding their own organisations requirement for swimming ability**

#### **5. Election / re-election of Chair and Vice Chair**

The meeting re-elected James Stevens as the Chair and Jim Watson as Vice-Chair for another year.

#### **6. Update into the Maritime and Coastguard Agency (MCA) survey into water users**

Peter Brown (PB) provided an overview of the MCA and how the organisation had evolved in recent years. PB provided the meeting with an update into the MCA survey into water users. The survey aims to understand the customer base from a recreational view. PB highlighted that this survey will take place every year for the next three years. Using participation figures against accident/incident figures will enable the dependency of risk to be established for activities. PB confirmed that MCA are striving to achieve three main outcomes; Evidence based, risk focused and delivered in partnership. Therefore the importance of NGB engagement with MCA is vital and the meeting discussed the merits of such working relationships and the model of the BSAC was cited as an excellent working relationship. PB confirmed that the NGB for each activity should be seen as the responsible organisation for setting safety standards; this was fully supported by the meeting.

The meeting also briefly discussed the MCA's enforcement for inland waterways and inland operations.

#### **7. Statistics - Update on accident statistics**

PB outlined the work MCA and RoSPA are undertaking on UK water related fatalities. PB tabled a work in progress paper to outline how this work was progressing. The meeting agreed that this was a significant step forward in producing accident statistics and thanked RoSPA and MCA for there work in getting this information this far. The meeting noted that there will be supporting information which will be available alongside this table, although individual names will be removed from this information.

The meeting agreed that it would be very useful to have a definition for each activity. Norman Brook (NB) raised concerns that a number of the fatalities were not related to water recreational activities but featured in the table under the swimming category. The meeting agreed to discuss the categories in more detail, at the next meeting.

#### **8. To discuss the safety implications for qualifying disabled instructors**

JS informed the meeting that the RYA had lost a case in the disability discrimination courts for not qualifying an epileptic as a RYA instructor. JS sort member's views on whether NGBs had guidelines on this issue, or whether they looked at each case on a case by case basis, following medical advice. NB confirmed that triathlon do prevent people from participating. JS confirmed that there was a difference when the individual had a safety critical role. Roger Barnard (RB) suggested that being able to drive a car was a useful benchmark for a safety critical role. RB also highlighted that each NGB needs to look at individual circumstances and conduct relevant individual risk assessments. If specific measures can be put in place then the individual should be allowed to instruct.

#### **9. Accident Investigation**

JS raised the issue that when a major accident happens it is subject to an investigation by several organisations e.g. HSE, MCA, RNLI, MIAB and the Port Authority. JS informed the meeting that he would raise this issue at the next main forum meeting to try and create a more joined up approach.

PB highlighted that although MCA rarely conduct investigations, MCA welcome this being discussed at a high level.

DW suggested that it would be a relevant item for the GIG to discuss. JS agreed that this should be discussed at GIG with a recommendation for a more joined up approach.

Jim Watson suggested that Coroners Courts should also be included as they investigate major accidents as well.

#### **10. Membership of the Advisory Group**

The meeting discussed the ongoing request from the Rivers and Lakes Swimming Association to become a member of the advisory group. CE informed the meeting that the RALSA had now become CCPR members. Following discussions, the meeting agreed that normally the members are representatives of Sports National Governing Bodies, and if not, are present with the support of the relevant NGB. The meeting agreed that the Chair would write to RALSA.

#### **Action: JS to write to RALSA**

#### **11. Any other business**

Norman Brook (NB) raised two issues:

1. Water safety NGB guidelines being available on the main Forum website. DW informed the meeting that some details are available on the website. It was agreed that DW would collate these and add them to the website.
2. If water quality was within the remit of this group. Following discussion it was agreed that water quality was not within this groups remit.

Peter Brown raised the following issues:

1. MCA keen to create productive partnering relationships with NGB's for water related activities.
2. Data research being collated on all water related information
3. For the advisory group to consider inviting Angling organisations to these meetings

**12. Date of next meeting**

The date of the next meeting was confirmed as 4 October 2006 at CCPR, London.