



National Water Safety Forum

Watersports Advisory Group

Notes of meeting held on 4 October 2006, at CCPR, London

Attendees:

Chair	James Stevens	Royal Yachting Association
Vice Chair	Jim Watson	British Sub Aqua Club
	David Walker	Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents
	Stuart Ward	Amateur Rowing Association
	Anna Blannin	National Sailing School Association
	Sarah Belton	British Triathlon
	Rob Inett	Royal Life Saving Society
	Charlotte Edward	CCPR and Secretariat

1. Welcome and instructions

James Stevens (JS) welcomed everyone to the meeting.

2. Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence had been received from Ben Woods, Adrian Lole and Barry Frost.

3. Notes of the previous meeting

The notes of the previous meeting held on the 22 February 2006 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 (DW) would add these to the Forum website.

4. Matters arising from the notes

Item 10 – Membership - JS confirmed that he had responded to River and Lake Swimming Association request to be members of the group. However, because RALSA are not a NGB their request for membership had been declined. JS highlighted that he had recommended to RALSA to align with Amateur Swimming Association who are represented on the forum's advisory groups.

Item 9 Accident Investigation – JS highlighted that multi accident investigation was still an issue and the case of the Isle of Wight missing boat had been investigated by multi agencies.

The meeting discussed the need to communicate effectively with the Coroners Courts. DW confirmed that ROSPA had written to the Coroners umbrella body. It was noted that a reasonably good relationship existed with individual Coroners but was very difficult to get key messages to the umbrella body. Jim Watson (JW) suggested that Coroners can either come from a medical or legal profession and therefore relates to the views that they take.

The Coroners procedures were discussed. DW highlighted that a current consultation into Coroners procedures was taking place and ROSPA were feeding into this consultation. DW confirmed that ROSPA do provide evidence to assist Coroners decisions. JS concluded that there is a good body of knowledge within this meeting if members or NGBs require more information about Coroners.

4.1 Report from the National Water Safety Forum Meeting

David Walker (DW) provided an update. The NWSF Conference will be held on the 9 and 10 October.

DW confirmed that the Department for Transport was undertaking a review of the Watersafety Committees and will report at the end of October.

It was noted that the format for advisory group to report has been revised.

Action: DW to discuss with CE

4.2 Report from the Information Group Meeting

Stuart Ward (SW) presented and discussed a tabled paper which outlined the key issues from the recent information group meetings. The key issues were:

- Development of a five-year plan for the information group
- Headline fatality reporting
- UK Water-related incident database gap analysis
- National water safety day
- Child swimming pool admission policy research

The meeting discussed the UK Water-related incident database gap analysis project by the Health and Safety Laboratory and the implication this could have for NGBs. The members raised concerns about the feasibility of collecting incident and near miss data and how this data could be used.

DW confirmed that the idea of NGB collecting this data stemmed from a recommendation from the GIG Meeting. DW highlighted that he was seeking views on these recommendations.

Action: DW to email this recommendation to members

It was agreed that this would be an item for further discussion at the next meeting.

5. The Government's proposals – alcohol restrictions for water recreation users

JS outlined the two high profile events which happened in 2005. Following one of these cases the MAIB recommendation was "2005/133 Work closely with the RYA, MCA and other relevant stakeholders to realise the urgent introduction of national regulation to establish limits on the amount of alcohol which may be consumed by operators of leisure vessels".

JS highlighted that there are already a requirement for commercial vessels, but how to enforce any restrictions within the recreational sector still raised a number of questions and issues. JS confirmed that no alcohol related fatalities had happened in 2006.

It was noted that Harbour Byelaws have alcohol policy and that the Port of London Authority is the only place to have a breathalyser for water users.

JW confirmed that no NGB condoned alcohol consumption when participating in a water based activity. JW suggested that education instead of legislation would be a sensible way to address this issues.

Anna Blannin suggested it may be worth looking at how other countries address this issue.

Following the discussion the meeting agreed that a persuasive case was needed with detailed evidence before any law was introduced.

6. Statistics - Update on accident statistics

DW outlined the latest developments on the fatalities statistics. DW confirmed that they would be more detailed information also available for each incident. DW requested members to send comments regarding the definitions for each activity.

Action: send comments regarding the definitions for each activity to DW

Members highlighted that this information was a great improvement on the previous data.

DW confirmed that the proposed framework was to be discussed at the next interdepartmental group at the end of October.

7. Future issues

It was agreed that these meetings were useful to focus on generic issues, share best practice and to support each other when issues arise in a particular activity.

8. Any other business

JW confirmed that BSAC will be publishing their incident report for 2005/06. JW to bring copies of this report to the next meeting.

SW raised the issue of swimming as a pre-requisite for participation in water based activities and for swimming ability to be defined. Following discussion it was agreed that the meeting supported the need for all school children to meet the key stage level 2 requirement to learn to swim.

JS concluded that at the next meeting he will retire as the Chair.

9. Date of next meeting

The date of the next meeting was confirmed as Wednesday 7 February, at the Amateur Rowing Association Offices, Hammersmith