

National Water Safety Forum

Watersports Advisory Group

Draft Minutes

Meeting held on 2 February 2005, at CCPR, London

Attendees:

Roger Barnard	Sport England
Anna Blannin	National Sailing School Association
Peter Cornall	Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents
Mike Devlin	British Canoe Union
Simon Goodey	Amateur Rowing Association
Adrian Lole	Royal Life Saving Association
Barry Odell	British Water Ski Federation
James Stevens	Royal Yachting Association
David Walker	Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents
Richard Ward	British Canoe Union
Stuart Ward	Amateur Rowing Association
Jim Watson	British Sub-Aqua Club

Charlotte Edward CCPR

1. Welcome and Introductions

Charlotte Edward (CE) welcomed everyone to the first watersports advisory group meeting.

2. Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence had been received from Caroline Martin, Sub Aqua Association.

3. An overview of the National Water Safety Forum

Peter Cornall (PC) informed the meeting that the National Water Safety Forum has replaced the National Water Safety Committee (NWSC). The re-organisation of the existing committee was prompted by the Government's review into inland water safety, lead by the Department for Transport. The review, known as 'Roles and Responsibilities' recognised that responsibility for inland water safety was spread across a number of Government departments and recommended the establishment of an interdepartmental group with links to the NWSC.

Following the Government review, the structure of the NWSC was considered. The Government was keen to see a wider, enhanced, membership of the committee to encourage full involvement by all relevant and interested organisations. It was recognised that to enable the Committee to grow its membership, it would be necessary to reorganise, as currently with so many organisations represented, time for relevant issues to be discussed was at a premium. It was also essential to ensure that links with Government were strengthened. RoSPA provides the secretariat for

the Forum with funding from the Department for Transport and the Department of the Environment and Rural Affairs.

The role of the Forum is to be the natural body in which organisations involved in water safety will participate in order to have a strong voice with Government on water safety issues. The Forum is primarily concerned with preventative action and water safety education rather than search and rescue. It advises and comments on legislation but is not directly involved in regulatory or enforcement activity.

The National Water Safety Forum has allowed greater participation by organisations with an interest in water safety by creating 6 advisory groups; Beach Safety, Inland Water Safety, Sea Safety, Swimming Pool Safety, Water Sports Safety and an Information group. Members of each group meet to discuss issues relevant to their topic and field of expertise and develop policy and guidance. The chair of each advisory group sits on the liaison group which is the overall steering group of the Forum and provides the link with the Inter-Departmental Government Group.

4. Election of Chair and Deputy Chair

The meeting unanimously agreed that James Stevens would be Chair and Jim Watson would be Deputy Chair.

5. Terms of Reference and composition for the advisory group

James Stevens (JS) suggested that the Terms of Reference (ToR) needed to be broad to enable the group to have flexibility. It was agreed that the ToR needed to incorporate the encouragement of participation in water recreation activities and for legislation not to hamper participation.

Members agreed that the ToR needed to include the importance of sharing of best practice and learning from mistakes that had occurred.

Action: CE to formalise an initial draft ToR and circulate to members of the group for comment

6. Generic safety issues

The meeting agreed that the following generic safety issues could be discussed at future meetings:

- Education and Training
- Impact on Legislation – the group agreed that it would respond to consultation when required, with a collective voice, when possible
- Equipment – buoyancy aids / lifejackets and suitable clothing

The overlap between each advisory group was discussed. It was agreed that ROSPA would provide a list of which organisation are members of which advisory groups.

Action: PC or DW to provide details of which organisations are members of which advisory groups

6.1 Equipment

It was agreed that buoyancy aids and lifejackets would be discussed at the next meeting.

6.2 Training / Competence

Members discussed the improved relationship with the Health and Safety Executive, who are now approaching NGB for guidance and best practice when incidents / accidents occur.

Roger Barnard informed the meeting that the Sport England guidance was currently being rewritten and it was going to be less prescriptive and focus more on current best practice.

The meeting discussed the negative image that can occur after one or two accidents, particularly by the press and the problems this can cause.

7. Accidents statistics for watersports

The members agreed that the current statistics that were available from MCA, SEAREM and INREM were all unreliable as a source for accident statistics for watersports.

The meeting agreed that it should be the work of the National water Safety Forum to improve the statistics on accidents. PC highlighted that this issue was already on the Forum's work programme

8. National Water Safety Forum website

David Walker (DW) gave a presentation on the National Water Safety Forum website. Members were encouraged to provide feedback on the website and in particular the water sports safety area of the site to DW in due course.

It was agreed to discuss the website in more detail at the next meeting.

Action: members to provide feedback on the website

9. Any other Business

Jim Watson raised the issue of communication between the group and it was therefore agreed to set up a group email.

JS informed members that he would happily be the link between this group and Team Watersports (ARA, BCU and RYA), which would enable Team Watersports to focus on the promotion of the sports rather than safety issues.

It was agreed that the advisory group could act as a collective voice, particularly when incidents/ accidents happen.

10. Future meetings

It was agreed that the next meeting will take place on 11 May 2005 at 1pm, at CCPR, London.