

Minutes of VHFCC Meeting 9th December 2023

Attendees :

Andy Cook, G4PIQ (Chair),
Ian Pawson G0FCT,
Pete Lindsay G4CLA,
Richard Baker, GD8EXI,
Mike Goodey, G0GJV,
Jacqui Goodey, G6XSY (Trophies)

Apologies:

John Quarmby, G3XDY,
Richard Staples, G4HGI,
Martin Hall, GM8IEM
Richard Staples, G4HGI
Stewart Bryant, G3YSX (Board Liaison)

1. Review of Actions

G4PIQ's discussion with G4SWX over band-planning is on-going.

G4PIQ's action to discuss how to get contesting into Brickworks is on-going

All other actions are complete.

2. Consultation Response for 2024 and Resultant Rule Changes

This meeting was called to review the outcome of the rules consultation for 2024 and to set the final rules for 2024

The full results of the survey are included in Annex A. We received an excellent response with 321 respondees. Results for each question were quite clear cut and as a result we agreed to

- Move the Christmas Contests from 2024 to start a day later on 27th December in the 1500-1700 hour slot. We noted that we had not considered moving these contests to an evening or a morning slot within the consultation. We also noted that we did not plan to revert to the 4 bands per day structure, or a compromise 2 bands per day since when the initial change from 4 bands per day to 1 band per day was made, entries increased. However, we will keep this under review.

- We are maintaining the log submission deadlines for VHF contests at 7 days after the contest. The one clarification to this is for the 2m, 4m and 6m Trophies, the October UHF contest, and the November 2m CW Contest, we will forward those logs which we have received and which have given consent into the IARU adjudication process after 3 days. This 3-day deadline is set by IARU Region 1.
- We are changing the sections in the FM Activity Contests to be licence class based. So there will be a section for Foundation licensees (10W power limit initially, expected to rise to 25W when new licence conditions take effect), a section for Intermediate licensees (50W power limit) and an Open section for everyone else (50W power limit). We have also removed the recommendation to use vertical polarisation.
- We have moved to a bonus-based scoring system (based on locators, post-codes and countries) for both the 4m and 6m AFS contests. This should enable the lower placed stations to play a larger part in their AFS team scores. Following a review of the impact of bonuses on a re-scored 2023 event, we agreed that it should be a 200 point bonus for each square, postcode and country worked. We recognised that we're not making similar changes for the 2m and 70cm AFS contests. We may review these in the future dependant upon the success of the changes to the 4m and 6m events.
- Following the current OFCOM review of the licence, it is possible that in the future it will be possible for un-licensed people to operate a station under supervision. We have decided that such un-licensed operators do not need to be RSGB members in order to compete in an RSGB VHF Contest. We agreed wording surrounding this change which is included in the 2024 rules.
- We agreed to implement power categories (Open, Restricted, Low Power) into the 24-hour contests (March, May, September 2m and June 6m). For these larger events we did not want to remove the single / multi op splits and also wanted to maintain the 6 hour and 24 hour options, so have done this through results filtering as is already done at HF to maintain a manageable number of sections.
- G4PIQ has contacted G3XTT regarding the possibility of co-ordinating the PW and RSGB 4m September contests. G3XTT had forwarded the request to PW Contest Manager and feedback is still awaited, so we have taken no action at this time.
- We will make any necessary changes to the amend the power levels for Foundation Sections when the new licence conditions come into force.
- We discussed changing the general Low Power limit from 10W to 25W to reflect the expected change in Foundation licensee levels. However, we recognised that the vast majority of stations entering the Low Power sections are not Foundation licensees and such a change could prove unpopular through changes to battery life for portable stations, existing equipment being unsuitable etc. For that reason, we agreed we would not make such a change without consultation.

- We clarified that both the SF and O sections of the VHF Championship had the '7 from 11 to count' rule applied, while the AFS section counted all 11 events. This is aimed to maximise participation at a club level.
- We agreed to remove 50.150 MHz from the excluded frequency list as it is not in common usage as a 'calling frequency'.
- We will clarify that the Marconi 2m CW Contest is treated as an IARU event.
- We agreed to review any potential changes to 23cm contest rules as a result of the recent WRTC decisions at a later date when the impact and implementation is clear.
- We agreed to leave the FT8 contest timing as it stands.
- We agreed to approach the N1MM+ and DXLog authors to ask to have our rule changes implemented in the common logging packages. **Action : G0FCT.** Thanks to Mike G0GJV for implementing these changes in Minos.

From the consultation comments there were many individual points made, but only a few themes with any significant number of common views. These included

- To introduce an unassisted / assisted section split. We have consistently chosen not to pursue this due route to the extreme difficulty in enforcement including to the passive use of cluster / ON4KST.
- There were some comments on what constitutes a 'local' club. We did not believe it is viable for VHFCC to define this with any more complexity than a distance-based rule. We do not wish to implement a team size limit because the current rules are very effective in increasing participation.
- Once again, there was a view from some entrants that 'stations don't beam North' and something needs to be done in the rules to fix this. Many contests include a bonus / multiplier element which means that competitive stations need to look in all directions. Rules with differential bonus levels for more remote areas were tried for a period within the UKACs but were widely rejected, and we are not considering re-introducing those changes.

We now need to get these changes into a published calendar as quickly as possible.

Action : G4PIQ to draft a 'What's New' section

Action : G4CLA to implement changes

Action : All to review

3. AOB

None

Annex A – Results of VHF Contests Consultation 2023

Q1

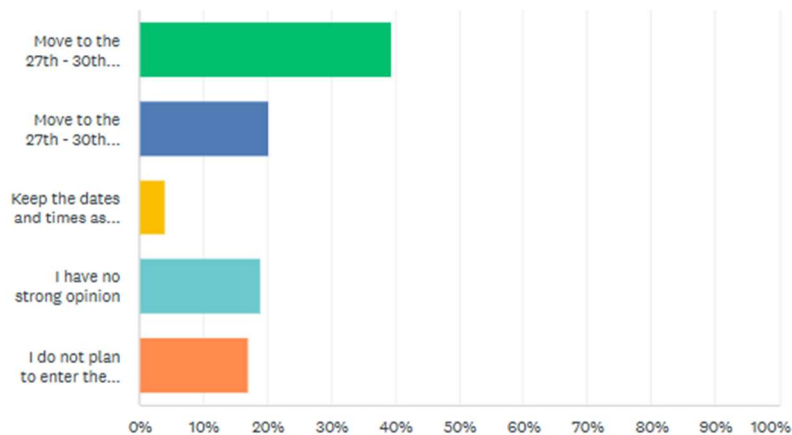


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
We have received feedback that the timing of the Christmas Contests starting on Boxing Day (26th December) does not work well for many people. We propose to move the events to start a day later and run from 27th December to 30th December and also to start one hour later and run 1500 – 1700. Should we

Answered: 315 Skipped: 6



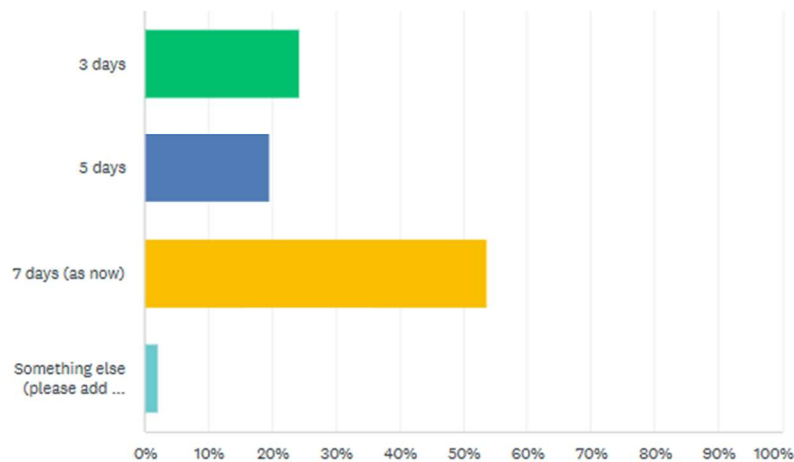
ANSWER CHOICES ▼	RESPONSES ▼	
▼ Move to the 27th - 30th December, 1500 - 1700	39.37%	124
▼ Move to the 27th - 30th December, but keep existing timing 1400 - 1600	20.32%	64
▼ Keep the dates and times as they are now 26th - 29th December, 1400 - 1600	4.13%	13
▼ I have no strong opinion	19.05%	60
▼ I do not plan to enter these contests	17.14%	54
TOTAL		315

Q2

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
We are considering whether we should reduce our log submission time from the current 7 days to 5 days or 3 days. This would allow us to turn around results a little more quickly. However, we are conscious that there are groups where people type up logs for other team members after the event and want to ensure that we do not prevent them from entering. Because of this, we will take a carefully balanced view of what to do. Note that for those contests where we submit logs to IARU, we will send those which we have received after 3 days to align with a new IARU ruling for 2024. Do you think that we should have a submission time of

Answered: 316 Skipped: 5



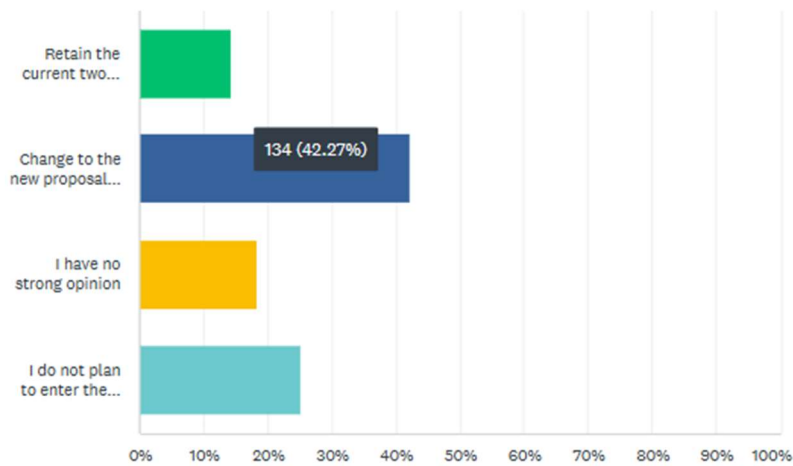
ANSWER CHOICES ▼	RESPONSES ▼	
▼ 3 days	24.37%	77
▼ 5 days	19.62%	62
▼ 7 days (as now)	53.80%	170
▼ Something else (please add to comments)	2.22%	7
TOTAL		316

Q3

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
We have received a suggestion that the current structure of the FMACs are discouraging to the Foundation and Intermediate licensees for who they were partly designed for to encourage. We are considering re-structuring the sections for the FMACs to have Foundation, Intermediate and Open sections. The Foundation section will be open to Foundation Licensees only and will have a maximum power set to the level of that licence (currently 10W). Similarly the Intermediate section will be open to Intermediate Licensees and will retain a maximum power of 50W. The Open section will be for all other licensees and also be restricted to 50W (to align with the typical maximum power of FM only radios). Should we

Answered: 317 Skipped: 4



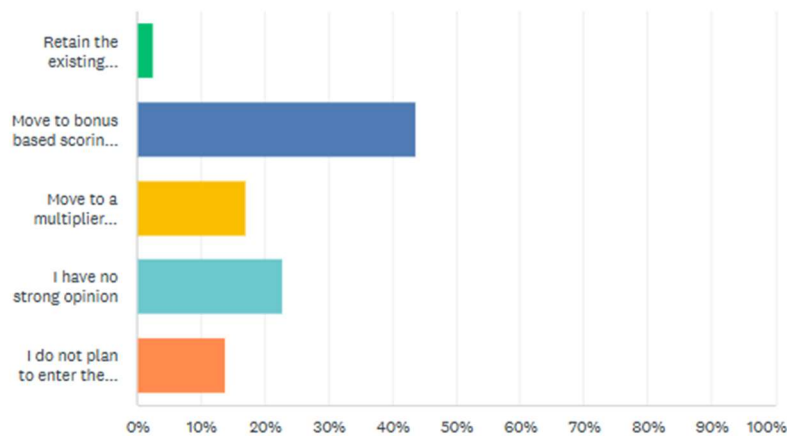
ANSWER CHOICES ▼	RESPONSES ▼	
▼ Retain the current two sections (50W and 10W - no licence class separation)	14.20%	45
▼ Change to the new proposal (Foundation, Intermediate and Open Sections)	42.27%	134
▼ I have no strong opinion	18.30%	58
▼ I do not plan to enter these contests	25.24%	80
TOTAL	317	

Q4

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We have received a suggestion that the 6m and 4m AFS contests should have the same scoring structure as one another and use the multiplier based scoring scheme currently used on 6m (Post Code, Locators and Countries). On reviewing this, we believe that moving to a Bonus rather than a Multiplier scheme would allow stations lower down the table to contribute more effectively to their team score without removing to need to maximise the areas that an entrant chases QSOs from. The impact of moving to Bonuses would be to stop the leading stations having a dramatically large score compared to those further down the tables which currently makes stations further down the table contributing very low scores to their team entries. Should we

Answered: 311 Skipped: 10



ANSWER CHOICES ▼	RESPONSES ▼	
▼ Retain the existing scoring system (multipliers on 6m, no multipliers or bonuses on 4m)	2.57%	8
▼ Move to bonus based scoring for both the 4m and 6m AFS contests	43.73%	136
▼ Move to a multiplier based scoring on both 4m and 6m	17.04%	53
▼ I have no strong opinion	22.83%	71
▼ I do not plan to enter these contests	13.83%	43
TOTAL		311