Radio Society of Great Britain
Advancing amateur radio since 1913

Minutes of the July VHFCC Skype Meeting
July 25th 2018 @ 20:00

Attendees:

Andy	G4PIQ
Ian	G0FCT
Mike	G0GJV
John	G3XDY
Stewart	G3YSX
Pete	G4CLA
Nick	G4FAL
Richard	G4HGI
Richard	GD8EXI
Martin	GM8IEM

1. 144MHz Trophy

1.1. We discussed some specific instances of rule infractions, actions that we have taken and changes to future policy to ensure better compliance and appropriate action.

1.2. We discussed our approach to stations avoiding a penalty by requesting that their log be withdrawn and agreed that it would be our policy not to allow this.

2. Definition of Single Operator

2.1. The definition of what constitutes a single operator entry was discussed at some length. This has been a subject of debate over many years.

2.2. The current definition requires a single person to do all the operating in the contest, but does not constrain setup to that individual. We realise this is not a universally popular position, but we decided we need to retain this ruling for reasons of international alignment and the ability to define timescales etc. for setup contributions by others.

2.3. The definition of operating includes ALL operating activities including receiving, transmitting, monitoring of cluster and any communications via forums like ON4KST.

3. Use of FT8 in RSGB VHF Contests

3.1. We have started to see some FT8 QSOs claimed within recent contests. In general, these have not been complete QSOs (and have been dis-allowed during adjudication) because not all necessary information has been exchanged off air. It is complex to configure the current version of FT8 software to make a full contest exchange. We recognise that a new version of WSJT with a contest mode is likely to hit the streets in soon.

3.2. We have run the first generic MGM contest (perhaps in the world) in April this year with a set of rules structured to support a variety of MGM modes with varying and limited exchanges. The initial reaction to this contest was positive and we look forward to more activity in the second event later in the year.

3.3. However, we are concerned about the ability of FT8 to completely change the look and feel of contesting and rapidly drive down activity on SSB / CW while not necessarily adding to numbers of stations active. We are also concerned about the impact of contesting to FT8 - a major contest taking place on one or more of the common operation frequencies for FT8 would lead to huge levels of QRM.

3.4. So - without trying to be 'luddite' in our approach - at this time we feel we should keep FT8 and similar modes inside a separate more experimental contesting framework. We will propose to grow the number of these MGM contests during 2019.

3.5. The need for clarity on contestant's use of MGM is sufficiently pressing that we will issue clarification of the rules before the September 2m contest. Allowed modes for standard contests will be SSB, JT6M, FSK441, CW, FM, AM, ISCAT. We will keep this list under regular review. **ACTION: G4PIQ to draft comms and G0FCT to distribute this update via newsletter and other comms vehicles**

4. **FMAC's**

4.1. A review of entries within the FMACs suggests that they are having minimal impact in their intended role of providing a mechanism for new stations to find a way into contesting.

4.2. This has been the case both this year and last year (prior to the rule change on antenna definitions which has not proved popular with all). They are currently largely a warm-up event for the UKACs with the same entrants taking part.

4.3. We have many similar contests in our calendar and we therefore propose to terminate these contests for 2019.

4.4. In the light of growing interest in FT8 - we discussed replacing some of the FMACs with an FT8 contest as an experiment for 2019. We will consult on this. **ACTION: G4PIQ to add this to the consultation**

5. **Tabulation of Overseas stations in Contests**

5.1. Our approach for handling overseas entrants in VHF contests varies from contest to contest for historic and usually good reason. We wanted to agree a route forwards which gives as much consistency as is sensible without fundamentally changing what we do (because on review we believe the variation in behaviour between contests is there for reasonable purposes).

5.1.1. Overseas entries in UKAC are allowed in the club scores – this is different from the other contests because they can only work UK stations - and they can form part of teams. Overseas stations in these events are tabulated and awarded a position mixed in with UK entrants.

5.1.2. A small number of contests where overseas stations can work anyone attract substantial numbers of overseas entries (e.g. 6m Trophy, MGM). In these events, we will produce a separate overseas section and award normal placement markers in that section.

5.1.3. Most contests only attract a tiny handful of overseas entries (who can and do work anyone), and in these events we will tabulate overseas results within the overall table, but only denote their position with a # so as not to reduce the apparent achievement of the UK entrants.

5.2. We recognise that at present the downloadable position certificates can have their position changed by having overseas stations in the main table. Pete will kindly look into whether that can be fixed - although it is not expected to be a simple change. **ACTION: G4CLA to investigate updating the issuing of Positional Certificates to be correct with Overseas stations listed in # positions**
[Post Meeting Note: the new position certificate facility has been updated to consider overseas entries e.g. the place certificate for the highest placed non-UK&CD station will say '1st Place Non-UK' etc. The place certificate for highest placed UK&CD station will say '1st Place'.]

6. **Trophies**

6.1. Trophy management is about to change

6.2. G0GJV, G6XSY and G0FCT will now manage, store, transport and control all the trophies on behalf of RSGB moving this function away from HQ who no longer have the space and manpower to handle it.

6.3. Storage will be in in commercial premises.

6.4. The committee thanks Mike, Jacqui and Ian for taking on this substantial task for the good of the wider contesting community.

6.5. After a period of hiatus, we are now in a position where we could accept a limited number of new trophies.

6.6. G4PIQ had been approached earlier in the year by a potential donor for a new UKAC trophy but had to put the donor on hold at that time until these management changes could be made. **ACTION: G4PIQ to re-contact the donor and see if they are still interested**

7. Consultation

7.1. We don't feel that we should be making radical changes to the rules for 2019, but there are a number of areas we should ask for feedback on:

7.1.1. Should we tweak the scoring for the microwave UKAC to improve the spread and encourage more entrants without allowing abuse?

7.1.2. Should we restrict the number of operators that can re-use the same location / equipment in a contest in a single contest– suggested limits of 2 or 3?

7.1.3. Consult on FMAC vs FT8 on 2m 4m and 6m – consult on what bands?

7.1.4. Should we make changes to days / times for the Xmas Cumulative Contest?

ACTION: G4PIQ to draft a survey

8. AOB

8.1. We should refine the restricted antenna definition to allow flat panels as well – 2m max diagonal dimension.
ACTION: G4PIQ to update in draft 2019 rules

8.2. We should re-review contest entry levels
ACTION: G4PIQ to update and re-send the tracker

8.3. Ian G0FCT has had extensive discussions and more guidance from the RSGB on EU-GDPR. This will make some changes to what we are already doing, removing some requirements and adding others,
ACTION: G0FCT to prepare proposals for separate discussion

8.4. We need a regular meeting schedule
ACTION: G4PIQ to update meeting schedule

8.5. IARU are unlikely to continue to allow EU Contest committees to submit entries en-masse for GDPR reasons. Consequently, individuals will need to submit their own entries to IARU for European adjudication.
ACTION: G0FCT to call this out in the newsletter again
ACTION: G4CLA and G0FCT to discuss whether the log robot can be updated to allow to a semi-automated submission

8.6. We would like to have regular updates on what's happening in the IARU C5 Contest Working Group (C5CWG) Committee
ACTION: G4PIQ to ensure this is a standing agenda item

8.7. For a variety of reasons, we have not progressed on publicity support. Need to re-engage
ACTION: G4PIQ to do a trawl again for candidates and co-ordinate with G4FAL

9. Date of Next Meeting: TBA (ACTION: G4PIQ)