



### Minutes of VHFCC Meeting 2<sup>nd</sup> October 2024

#### Attendees:

Andy Cook, G4PIQ (Chair),  
Ian Pawson G0FCT,  
Pete Lindsay G4CLA,  
Richard Baker, GD8EXI,  
John Quarmby, G3XDY,  
Richard Staples, G4HGI,  
Mike Tubby, G8TIC  
Mike Franklin, G3VYI (Trophies)  
Peter Bowyer, G4MJS (Board Liaison)

#### Apologies:

Mike Goodey, G0GJV  
Martin Hall, GM8IEM  
Nick Totterdell, G4FAL (HFCC)

#### **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. G4MJS offered to help facilitate this.

All other actions are complete.

#### **2. Trophy Update**

Andy, G4PIQ explained that Trophy policy is not directly in the remit of VHFCC and hence the debates about a revised Trophy policy had not included the wider VHFCC. The lack of communication to VHFCC on what was changing was an omission on G4PIQ's part. The Trophy manager is responsible for the policy while working with the CSC and under the wider board liaison responsibility of G4MJS. Obviously HFCC and VHFCC have an input to what happens – but we don't do the work so don't control the policy.

Despite widespread and repeated appeals for help with Trophies after Jacqui, G6XSY retired from the role after many years of diligent service, RSGB did not receive any workable proposals to fill the role. Mike, G3VYI saw the gap, and kindly volunteered to fill it. But without wider support, and in the time available, was unable to commit to the same

arrangements as previously in place. We are very grateful to Mike for standing up to do this – without it we would have no trophy presentations at the Convention.

The issue around engraving is slightly separate. Many of the RSGB trophies are large, and the number of engravers who will support this work is dwindling. All enquiries made have pointed back to our existing engraver who is due to retire shortly.

This is not a closed position though – RSGB are open to proposals of additional help to attempt to restore the existing arrangements – and we will make that clear at the Convention.

**Action – G4MJS to convene a working group to move this on. To include at least G4MJS, G3VYI, G8TIC, G0FCT, G6XSY and a representative from HFCC.**

### ***3. Review of Entry Levels***

An updated spreadsheet showing the status of UK VHF contest entries is attached at Appendix A. Any entries in italics are part year data (8 or 9 months).

Overall activity levels are showing a small decline but not generally at a serious level. UKACs are still well supported, though the withdrawal of a few large clubs, has hit activity levels a little. SHF activity seems to be holding up well and even growing with the more widespread availability of commercial equipment.

The MGM contest was particularly poorly supported this year. We should consider moving it to align with the Perseids

Weekend entry levels are broadly static – some up – some down – but are suffering from the lack of casual SSB activity on the bands which appears common across Europe.

VHF NFD suffered its worst ever entry level this year. There was some discussion on this topic as to why, theories including, the greying population of amateurs, difficulty in assembling a team large enough, do we have too many sections, should we drop 23cm, should we turn the sweepers section into a conventional contest to attract more activity, should we include VHF NFD in the AFS championship. Points for discussion / exploration.

### ***4. Prepare for Consultation / Convention***

We will take the same approach as in the last 2 years and prepare some subjects to kick off the discussion at the Convention, take feedback from that event and then move to Consultation.

a. VHF NFD – See above

b. FMACs

The experiment of moving from power level sections to licence classes has not been effective. We propose to revert to the original format for 2025.

- c. Backpackers  
Activity levels seem OK for the first 3 contests but dropped off substantially in #4 and #5. Based on observation by the committee and feedback from entrants - Should we move to position-based normalisation for the overall table to make run-away scores have less of an impact. Should we move to have 4 from 5 count. Should we move to a bonus scheme rather than multipliers.
- d. Low Power  
Genuine multi-operator entries to the shortened Low Power events have dwindled to just 1 this year. Should we combine Open and Single Op Portable sections?

## 5. AOB

- a. Protect data frequencies  
We considered whether we should protect frequencies like 144.174, 144.360 and other data slots from SSB contest activity. We concluded this would make the rules even more complex, the allocations are generally not official, and standard operating practices are working effectively right now, so we would not do this.
- b. Out by One Serials  
It is easy for operators to mis-read the correct serial to send by 1 in some circumstances and we regularly see this sending error in VHF logs. At HF we already allow out-by-one serials and we agreed to allow this also in VHF logs to bring the two adjudication practices into line.
- c. BST Times  
We often see logs where operators log the times accidentally in BST rather than GMT. We agreed just to correct these and not apply a penalty.
- d. Zero point scores  
We had some discussion around what should be done when stations (particularly newcomers) end up with zero point score.
- e. We need to correct out VHF NFD rules to remove the need to make band choices at registration (because registration is now optional).
- f. Should we reconsider the 25W single antenna award now give the new power section splits in contests.
- g. Engagement  
We spent some time discussing how to improve engagement. We recognised that in an adjacent area, 145 Alive has been very successful in generating activity and we should see what we can learn from this. G4PIQ would like to refresh the committee, particularly with an aim around improving communications and social media presence. We will look for new members starting at the Convention.

## 6. Appendix A – VHF Contest UK Entry Levels Sept 2024

Contest	Year	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
144 UKAC		20	22	26	36	32	55	73	147	190	257	316	368	495	442	499	574	603	644	655	661	634	781	724	610	614	461
432 UKAC		19	12	20	22	22	19	23	34	53	66	166	218	300	293	369	420	417	469	453	465	431	583	556	478	413	335
1.3 UKAC		13	14	11	13	11	12	15	12	15	16	47	85	90	136	140	186	201	229	216	214	207	266	269	224	224	173
50 UKAC									25	43	59	169	238	237	258	348	437	454	496	435	424	391	516	470	358	314	257
70 UKAC									12		20	55	94	108	131	151	207	200	269	309	299	293	377	334	261	256	199
SHF UKAC														33	33	27	50	38	65	83	87	93	96	106	90	86	
144 FT8AC																								203	167	148	
432 FT8AC																									114	95	
70 FMAC																				67	57						
144 FMAC																				175	135	131	231	184	188	164	94
432 FMAC																				118	103	113	158	161	149	129	76
432 AFS		34	35	30	33	30	26	35	38		28	35	63	76	72	82	98	114	102	109	133	118	116	168	102	118	106
432 AFS Clubs		15	13	14	15	12	11	14	14		12	14	26	34	29	29	44	49	46	50	56	46	49	69	45	55	45
March 2/70		27	35	25		24	25	32	35	23	36	60	59	91	59	72	59	84	63	85	98	94	98	137	84	94	80
70 MHz Cums		24	24	20	20	18	20	19	22	29	28	38	50	74	73	76	81	87	88	102	89	83	82	79	57		
1st 70 MHz		22	13	12	18	22	22	18	19	21	23	32	35	47	46	40	41	49	58	56	44	39	56	56	47		
1st 50 MHz										36	48	39	35	48	42	53	48	49	53	61	41	49	120	73	43		
1st MGM (UK)																					53	38	47	29	48	35	21
May UHF		30	24	15	17	26		34		29	18	16	20	26	33	39	23	33	53	41	45	36	44	55	41	41	33
432 Trophy			21	15	17	20	22	28	23	28	25	28	33	35	37	48	54	37	51	57	52	57	80	90	66	57	63
10G Trophy		14	10		5	9	11	10	10	8	11	8	5	12	8	6	8	6	9	7	14	9	12	18	16	17	17
70 MHz CW													17	23	19	29	25	25	21	28	33	25	47	20	30	21	24
May 144		42	24		33	34	34	41	38	31	48	65	68	65	68	70	74	77	80	93	101	102	161	118	107	115	102
Backpackers		54	45		39	55	59	69	50	52	58	52	60	53	35	50	53	60	42	51	55	67	24	40	32	41	43
50 MHz Trophy		28	33	25	33	32	28	32	36	42	47	58	56	65	59	63	81	81	93	128	109	88	144	136	97	100	107
50 MHz CW															48	38	26	21	21	26	31	16	47	34	23	22	34
VHF NFD		68	73		56	59	52	53	58	49	63	76	61	69	54	80	62	58	59	61	58	54		38	43	48	34
VHF NFD Sweeper																	34	36	36	51	53	52		63	45	54	54
70 MHz Trophy		31	32	16	40	31	32	27	25	27	32	35	30	45	41	49	55	59	59	65	70	62	82	66	74	45	65
144 Low Power		32	32	13	23	25	33	34	35	27	28	46	48	36	33	32	35	47	58	60	58	72	99	70	74	77	74
432 Low Power		28	23	10	17	19	23	34	18	28	28	33	38	38	31	27	39	51	42	53	47	55	68	53	60	64	51
144 Trophy		35	30	34	27	35	37	42	46	55	54	78	75	68	56	66	71	82	85	101	101	114	162	123	107	132	106
2nd 70 MHz (AFS)		22	21	16	18	27	19	16	18	15	20	28	32	28	34	25	33	39	49	35	24	66	81	62	62	55	57
1.3 Trophy		15	11	7	13	10	10	10	12	9	9	11	17	20	22	17	18	32	25	30	31	46	39	23	33	37	
2.3 Trophy		12	10	6	8	8	8	6	7	4	4	4	8	11	10	7	8	11	9	11	17	21	18	12	12	15	
Oct UHF		19	15	12	16	15	15	12	21	22	20	23	18	25	25	29	22	40	27	35	28	41	32	29	29	45	
50 MHz AFS			14	17	19	17	21	16	13	11	24	33	32	78	77	84	84	96	111	87	95	101	103	99	81	75	
50 AFS Clubs														31	34	38	40	41	49	39	42	41	45	44	37	38	
Marconi		17	14		13	14	13	11	12	17	9	25	22	25	23	27	28	42	32	44	32	34	54	43	37	28	
144 AFS		68	77	74	76	81	60	66	45	48	77	93	125	113	107	115	138	125	156	133	150	128	178	144	138	116	
144 AFS Clubs		18	20	19	21	21	16	17	9	12	18	25	41	40	43	49	58	56	61	61	59	57	76	60	54	49	
2nd MGM																					37	12	35				
Xmas Cums		25	22	24	20	17	22	28	22	28	49	56	56	61	73	62	84	105	110	80	121	102	111	128	98	80	