



RAY~Link

Issue Eight - October 1992

RAY~Link is published for the benefit of all members of RAYNET. It is posted to all controllers, Zonal Representatives and National Committee Members who are requested to assist in ensuring a wide circulation amongst the membership of RAYNET.

All correspondence for RAYNET should now be sent to:

PO Box 56,
EASTLEIGH,
Hants SO5 60S.

Registrations should be sent to this address. Please remember to include £3.60 per member per year of membership required.

Chairman: Philip Howarth,
G3YAC

Secretary: Trevor Emery,
G3KWU

Talk-through Ian Jackson,
G8RWH, 5 Vivien Close,
Chessington, Surrey
KT9 2DE. (Please enclose a
business sized SAE.)

Supplies: Barbara Slater,
G6XYX, 47 Broom Road,
Lakenheath, Brandon.
Suffolk IP27 9EZ.
Tel: 0842-860475.

G4NRC - the weekly controllers
net: every Sunday morning,
0830 to 0915 hours local time
3.663 MHz.

News for *RAY~Link* should be sent to Ron Cowan. GM4SRL, 85 Eastwoodmains Road, Clarkston, Glasgow. Please include an evening and, if possible, a daytime telephone number.

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In this issue:

- **What's been happening:** *NCVO Response, Charity Application, PO Box 56, Registrations, Reminders, Request for historical material, New Home Office Book.*
- **Zonal Coordinator Nominations** - *details of the candidates and elections.*
- **Of Chanties, Groups and Membership** - *answers on the new structure.*
- **Hurricane Andrew** - *details on the recent disaster to hit the USA.*

What's been happening:

NCVO respond on our draft 'constitution'

Following the publication of the draft rules in *Ray~link6* we received some useful comments and have incorporated them in the draft.

We waited a little while for any final comments to arrive, before we sent a copy of the proposed Memorandum and Articles, the rules as well as some background information to the legal department of National Council for Voluntary Organisations. They responded shortly after gathering themselves together following their recent move.

They made some useful comments, perhaps the most interesting one being 'Firstly, I am not exactly clear about how the organisation relieves distress and poverty, other than through effective use of its members' radio expertise. As I see it, its main function is to give assistance in emergencies etc. so I would suggest that you take out the words "and to provide" in line 3 of clause 3 and to replace them with "by providing".'

A number of members had commented on this particular section. The original wording came from the first draft which the RSGB solicitors had produced some time ago. We were therefore a little reluctant to make any major changes here, especially as the criteria which are deemed charitable at law are quite strict and slightly at variance to common perception. We welcome NCVO's advice and have taken their suggestions on board. It is worthy to note that they found nothing else to comment on.

Charity Application Made

Our next step was to make an application to the Charity Commissioners.

We have particularly fortunate in the past couple of months to obtain the help and advice of a solicitor who is also a radio amateur. He has had considerable experience with charity affairs and has already helped us by completing the (multi-page) questionnaire from the Charity Commissioners. He has also provided us with a number of useful items of advice on our current activities.

We now await the response of the Charity Commissioners. Apparently it can take quite a few months for the application to go through, so we will have to be patient. It is possible that they may recommend changes to our 'constitution', though of course we hope not. Nevertheless, we must wait until they have cleared it before registering the company. (Otherwise we would have to call an EGM with all the expense and effort that will cause.)

POBox56

You may have noticed, that we now have a PO Box. It's PO Box 56, Eastleigh, Hants. SO5 6QS. You can use it for all items of correspondence for RAYNET.

Our Secretary, ably assisted by a few local volunteers, will ensure the box is emptied frequently and correspondence passed on to the appropriate volunteer. This saves you from having to keep long lists of names and addresses for all the various national functions. It also enables us to forward mail to the most appropriate volunteer and even re-direct it to their back-up if they are away on holiday!

Please still remember to send SAEs with all items requiring replies, particularly registrations and Talk-Through permits.

Registrations

During the past 3 months we have received subscriptions from 29 groups. We expect that this number will increase considerably in the next quarter as we enter a popular time for group AGMs and re-registrations. We have also received a significant number of donations and even several personal donations from well-wishers.

In case you missed *RAY-Link 7*, all registrations must now enclose the appropriate annual subscription - £3.60 per member, per year. Cheques of postal orders should be crossed 'A/C Payee' and made payable to 'Radio Amateurs' Emergency Network'. No money, unfortunately means no registrations!

To assist you, we have produced a 'Registrations Cover Sheet' (blank enclosed) which may be freely photocopied. As a safety check, it would help us if you would list the members being registered on the back of the sheet.

Request for historical material

Dave Hocking, G4FSS is wanting to compile a history of the organisation, both from a national and a local viewpoint. He is therefore looking for any relevant material eg newspaper articles, reports from members or User Services on major exercises or emergencies, amusing anecdotes, photographs, or formal documents etc

He would be most grateful for anything which you are willing to loan or give him. Please send it c/o PO Box 56.

New Home Office book

Dealing with Disaster is a new Home Office book which gives an interesting overview of UK civil emergency planning. We will be publishing a review in the next issue - unfortunately space did not permit inclusion in this one. 0

Zonal Coordinator Nominations

Our Secretary, Tevor (G3KWU), is pleased to announce that he has received the following valid nominations for Zonal Co-ordinators:

- Zone 1** Alan Wallis, G4YMU (*offered to serve 2 years*)
- Zone 3** Dave Hocking, G4FSS (*offered to serve 3 years*)
- Zone 4** Clifford Moore, G6CZS (*offered to serve 2 years - nominated by G8CPH, G8FTW, G8VNP, G4IFF, G6MCG.*)
Dave Seabrook, G6HPY (*offered to serve 2 years - nominated by G6EUO, G4OKH, G4GLI, G6SUR, G0OKK*)
- Zone 5** Ian Jackson, G8RWH (*offered to serve 2 years*)
- Zone 6** Cathy Clark. G1GQJ (*offered to serve 3 years*)
- Zone 9** Don Sunderland, G6FHM (*offered to serve 2 years*)
- Zone 10** Paul Gaskell, G4MWO (*offered to serve 3 years*)
- Zone 12 N** Ian Strachen. GM4FLP (*offered to serve 3 years*)
- Zone 12 S** Ron Cowan, GM4SRL (*offered to serve 3 years*)

(Details of the nominees in zones not having an election are available on request from the Secretary.)

The election for the Zone 4 ZC will take place at their Controllers meeting on 25 October in Newmarket. Obviously, all controllers in the Zone should consult their members so that their vote is representative of their members' wishes.

The other zones will be holding their own meetings shortly, if they have not yet already done so. It will be for these zones to declare their ZC where there is only the one candidate.

We are in the process of discussions in those zones for which nominations were not received by the deadline, with a view to making some interim arrangements.

The completion of these elections will mark a significant step in our re-organisation. The period for which candidates offered to serve will ensure the start of a stagger. This will prevent all the ZCs becoming due for re-election at the same time - so ensuring stability for the future.

We must apologise for the confusion caused in the last issue of RAY-Link about the closing dates for nominations. Yes it was 30 September, not the end of August!

Suffice to say that we have had abject apologies from our typesetter and proof reader. We are considering giving them magnifying glasses so that they can check the fine print better in future issues! ♦

Of Charities, Groups and Membership

-answers on the new structure

Although the draft rules and articles were published earlier this year, some members are still a little confused. So here are the answers to some of the common questions we've been asked.

Why are we interested in becoming a charity?

While the activity of the organisation has grown dramatically in the past 5/10 years, the finances have not kept up with it. If the organisation is to grow and be better as we all want it to, e.g. in training and publicity, then extra money is required. This will have to come from outside the organisation, but being a registered charity will make this job easier e.g. covenants and gift aid. There are also a number of small, but significant, tax advantages.

The public hold in particular regard charities as they are approved and overseen by the Charity Commissioners - they are seen to be good things. This is a status that we are keen to gain.

How does this affect our constitution?

To be a charity, the objects of the organisation have to be legally charitable. In addition there have to be a number of other safeguards e.g. to ensure that money is properly accounted for (audited) and is applied solely for the agreed charitable purposes.

Why do we want to form a company?

RAYNET must have some form of legal form, particularly if it is to be a charity. This could be either in the form of an 'un-incorporated members association' (like a local radio club) or a company limited by guarantee (like RSGB).

When we examined the matter, we found that the costs involved in being a charity were almost the same. The little extra effort involved in being a charitable company would enable us to form a legal body which will continue beyond the lifetime of any one individual and also would limit the liability of the members. Things not possible by being just an association. In size of membership, we will be in the top 10% or so of UK charities, so it befits us to have this structure.

How does this tie in with being a charity?

No problems - it is quite common! All the charity and company legislation is dovetailed so as to avoid anomalies.

Does this make RAYNET a business?

No - RAYNET's nature remains unchanged! It is just a framework for the organisation. Like everyone else, we just have to make sure we do not spend more than we have got - but that's common sense anyway!

What are the Memorandum and Articles of Association?

These form the 'constitution' of a company. The Memorandum defines the relationship the organisation has with the outside world, while the Articles define its internal workings.

What of Groups, Counties/Regions and Zones?

RAYNET has a tiered structure with groups, counties/regions, and zones unlike many organisations. Groups etc. have traditionally had considerable freedom, especially concerning money and the how they run their own affairs. This is defined in their own constitutions. The proposed articles recognises this and builds on it by providing a default constitution for those who have not yet adopted their own.

The UMIST conference last October in essence determined a simple election procedure for each level of the organisation. This would be easily and cheaply implemented at regular meetings and avoids all the costs and administrative problems of postal votes. It also ensures that a working team will develop at every level of the organisation. Obviously to ensure the wishes of the membership are carried through the organisation every controller must seek the views of their members before committing their vote.

What about membership?

If groups have their own constitution and the national organisation has one as well, this must mean that individuals are members of both organisations - their own local group as well as the national organisation. Consequently there are some provisions in the Articles to link the two memberships - for example you cannot be a member of one organisation without being a member of the other. There are one or two other safeguards built in as well.

If the national organisation is a charity, is my local group automatically one as well?

Unfortunately not! The freedom of groups to have their own constitutions and to control their own money makes them a distinct organisation and so they cannot use the national charity registration to directly benefit their own local funds.

However there is nothing to stop a local group from applying for charity registration itself. We designed the default constitution to be in a form that should be suitable to the Charity Commissioners. It has yet to be finally vetted, but once it is, we will be able to provide detailed guidance to help groups gain their own charity registration. Once registered, local groups will be able to tap local sources of charitable finance.

If we are becoming a charity to raise money, why do we still need a subscription?

Unfortunately it costs money to run RAYNET! While being a charity will help in raising funds, it is still going to take a lot of time and effort before any money is forthcoming. We cannot guarantee how much money we are going to get, nor when we will receive it as grants are often slow in being paid.

We have to adopt a sensible approach to ensure that the organisation survives from one year to the next UMIST agreed that the core funding of the organisation should come from the membership who should provide sufficient funds to keep the organisation alive. Any extra money can be used for projects to expand our activities. ♦

Hurricane Andrew

In late August, our news screens were full of Hurricane Andrew which was sweeping across South Florida and the coast of Louisiana.

The following comes from a recent copy of *The ARRL Letter* published by the American Radio Relay League and gives a flavour of the scale of devastation and the work of American radio amateurs.

The Damage

'No one could do much more than get ready for the consequences as Andrew smashed ashore in Dade County, with peak gusts estimated at 200mph and sustained winds perhaps as high as 185 mph at time - speeds normally associated with tornadoes!' W4MLE

I was in the area where Hugo struck in 1989. From what I've seen on TV. this is worse than Hugo. Much worse. At least, we had a few buildings left to use for shelters and temporary headquarters. Those folk down there had NOTHING LEFT! A South Carolina amateur.

'The Whites (W1CW and W1YL) chose not to evacuate. They piled cushions on the floor of the kitchen, in the centre of the house, and rode out the storm using a mattress to protect themselves from falling debris.

It was impossible to know the damage taking place outside because of the roar of the wind. Only when we went outside at dawn did we know that all our sheds, along with our new porch, had disappeared. Both our 60- and 70 ft. towers and all antennas were completely destroyed. The nearby 2-meter repeater, W4FWV, had been knocked out immediately - its antennas were on the 1400-ft TV Channel 6 tower, which had toppled.

We stayed right there the first couple of days. It was impossible even to get onto the street in front of our house, with it littered with debris. On Tuesday we finally found a working pay telephone 12 miles away.

In their two weeks of camping the Whites got food and water from the military supply stations. Mostly they stayed at the house, fearful of looters. Some of their neighbours were carrying guns to protect their property.

RACES and ARES - the difference

ARES - the Amateur Radio Emergency Service is the direct American equivalent of RAYNET. It is comprised of radio amateurs who are all members of ARRL (the US national society) and run by ARRL.

RACES - the Radio Amateur Civil Emergency Service is a service organised by a branch of federal government to provide emergency communications to local or state civil emergency agencies. In UK terms, it can be thought of a kind of CEPO organised amateur radio communications service.

The ARRL encourage all members of ARES to also be members of RACES so there is a high common membership.

Much of the damage to the Whites' house came from the rains that followed Andrew, pouring through holes in the former roof. The Whites moved out a couple of days before the authorities declared their house unfit for habitation; with electric service not expected to be restored for months, this was standard procedure throughout the area. They do not expect to return to live in Homesteads"

The Amateur Response

Over 100 amateurs were involved in Dade County alone. They were stationed at food distribution centres, relaying information between distribution sites emergency operations headquarters and the regional staging area.

'What did we do as the storm approached? - We battened down the hatches, our emergency plans were already in place 1 - and these emergency plans worked! WA4PFK

'42 Red Cross shelters were opened in Polk County, and 30 hams provided communication for more than 45 hours. KA4FZI acted as a shelter manager and communicator for about 24 hours in Lee County' WT4F

'Although it was easy to find amateur eager to rush in, it was essential that they go in with definite instructions. They needed to be completely self-contained with food, fuel, water, emergency power radio gear, sleeping accommodation - even toilet paper. We asked that teams of at least four amateurs travel in groups of several vehicles to speed the process and offer mutual support.' W4MLE

It is sad to report that one amateur died as a result of the relief efforts. Herbert Engleman. KD4OZY, was using a hand-held radio to relay information to a mobile station a week after the hurricane while working near a distribution centre in Homestead. He ran out during a thunderstorm to meet an Army helicopter and was struck by lightning. He died a few days later in hospital.

Further along the Coast

Hurricane Andrew did not stop in Florida. Two days later he hit the coast of Louisiana, where millions of dollars in damage occurred. According to the Louisiana Red Cross, 187 shelters were open during and after the hurricane, 23,000 Louisiana citizens were displaced by the storm, and the Red Cross alone spent \$8 million.

'On Thursday morning Disaster Relief Teams from the Baptist Mens Association, with units from Texas, Alabama, Arkansas and Louisiana, set up operations in the Iberia Parish EOC (*Emergency Operations Centre*) to provide and coordinate a massive feeding operation. On September 3 these units were still staffed with hams and in full operation feeding people in Iberia and St. Mary Parishes at several feeding points.' K5DPG

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