

# South Anglia Repeater Group

Web Site: <http://www.sargroup.co.uk/>

Chairman – Dave Sparrow G8XOR

Secretary – Keith Gaunt G7CIY

## Minutes from the 2023 SARG AGM – held Tuesday 25<sup>th</sup> April at Wetheringsett Village Hall

**Present:** - G7CIY + XYL, 2E0BCM, 2E0TNG, G0NIK, 2E0DWU, G8XOR, G0YAP, G7SMW, M0ZAH, G0OZS, G1YFF, M1NIZ, G7DWN, 2E0DIQ, M0IID, M7NES, 2E0TDN, G0AKC, G3XOK, G1VGI

**Apologies:** - M7CBX, G8VOC, G0CFB, M1ADV, G4RHR, M0JSA, 2E0ISJ, M5AEH, M0HKB, M0ZPU

### Welcome and Introductions:-

The meeting started at 7:30pm and the Committee introduced themselves. Dave welcomed everybody and thanked them for coming. Iain then went through the domestic arrangements for the venue.

### Minutes and Matters arising from the last years AGM

G7CIY read through the minutes from the 2022 meeting and they were accepted as an accurate record of events.

Proposed by 2E0TDN, 2<sup>nd</sup> by G0OZS and carried by all

#### Summary of outstanding actions

02/21 G8XOR to liaise with M6WUB to get test gear in order to fix the IH/MK de-sense issue.

Effectively closed, just awaiting installation

07/21 SARG Committee to coordinate efforts to get GB3EF working properly.

Effectively closed, EF is working fairly well, albeit on reduced power.

10/21 G8XOR to fix the CTCSS issue with GB3IH

Effectively closed, will be addressed at next site visit

01/22 SARG Committee to arrange purchase of New VHF repeater to replace GB3PO

Closed, thanks to Jake, the Group has a new ICOM repeater

02/22 SARG Committee to arrange purchase of New VHF antenna to replace old current aerial

Closed, noted that Steve 2E0TDN donated one, and we were donated a 2<sup>nd</sup> by Tom Tierney

03/22 G8XOR to test and check cavity filters and all co-ax for an end to end confidence test.

Closed, on a recent site visit, measurements were taken and all tests were as expected.

04/22 SARG Committee to find suitable use for Tait VHF repeater when it's replaced. We will keep the old MX294 as backup.

Closed, we will probably keep both boxes as they aren't worth a huge amount.

05/22 M1NIZ to follow up on M0JSA request about Talk Groups and report back – also update the web site with all relevant DMR information for both MK and AL

Closed, Mark wrote to Alan, but Talk Groups are out of our control.

06/22 G0OZS to drive forward replacement of GB3EF antenna and get repeater back up to full strength

Ongoing, Iain has contact with the BT rigging team; we are looking at maybe August 2023.

07/22 G0OZS to liaise with G0FEA to assist/check GB7PP performance

Closed, unfortunately, GB7PP has been taken off air permanently.

08/22 SARG Committee to assist M7CBX with our web site

Closed, Currently Chris is the ONLY person who has access.

09/22 2E0TDN to investigate the possibility of car stickers and report back

Closed, design completed and agreed to go ahead

10/22 G8XOR to liaise with M1TES with regards to LDF450 connectors

Closed, time expired

11/22 G7CIY to arrange next AGM for a more central location

Closed, thanks noted to Iain for finding and booking this venue.

12/22 G7CIY to check and arrange repeater insurance for this year

Closed

## **Chairman's Report:-**

The past twelve months has been somewhat frustrating with regards to the reliability of GB3PO and attempts to arrange the upgrade of the aerials on GB3EF.

It became apparent quite quickly that the re-install of the Tait base-station was not a success due to initially one problem that when the CWID was being sent the through audio was completely suppressed for the duration of the call-sign.

Secondly in addition to the above, at random times during a QSO the through audio would drop to a very low level making listening to a QSO very difficult, especially for mobile stations. As a result, the old MX294's were put back into service. The problem was later traced to a high resistance joint in a wire between the output of the receiver and transmitter audio input.

A great deal of work had already been done to source a new repeater prior to these problems manifesting themselves with little success. These problems stemmed from a major fire in China which completely destroyed one of two chip manufacturing plants, the aftermath of COVID and conflict in Ukraine resulting severe shortages of equipment. Suppliers were quoting a minimum of 12 months for delivery and would not give a price.

Thankfully Jake G1YFF came up with a solution using ICOM IC-FR5100 Transceiver module without using the 2U chassis unit thus significantly reducing the overall cost to the Group. Progress is going well to integrate the logic and upgrade the firmware running the logic.

All the other repeaters under the Group's umbrella appear to be working well with Jake proposing to do further work on GB3EA and GB3EZ but I will let him update the Group on this work.

Sadly, GB7PP has been switched off by Keith G0FEA and I am not sure if it will return at another location. There are plans to replace the aerial on GB3EF during the coming months when the BT riggers carry out the next scheduled tower inspection. We are totally in the hands of BT for which we are very grateful for doing this work at no cost to the Group as it will need three riggers on-site to complete the work.

**Dave Sparrow G8XOR**  
**Chairman - SARG**

## Treasurers Report -

### For Year ending 28th February 2023

#### 28th February 2022

Current account £2809.14  
Premium Account £823.61  
Cash In Hand £11.00

**Total £3643.75**

**Profit/Loss £317.73**

#### 28th February 2023

Current account £3215.45  
Premium Account £824.40  
Cash In Hand £39.30

**Total £4079.15**

#### Income

Donations £976.83  
Interest £0.79

**Total £977.62**

#### Expenditure

Repeater Insurance £79.97  
Website hosting £100  
Coax & plugs GB3PO £331.55  
Room hire (AGM) £25  
Stamps £5.70

**Total £542.22**

**Profit/Loss £435.40**

The accounts were proposed by G1YFF and 2<sup>nd</sup> by 2E0TNG – carried by all.

2E0TDN asked about better investments for our finances and suggested Premium Bonds. Mark and Steve to liaise to see what can be done. (AP)

#### Auditor's statement

Anne – G7DWN has checked the accounts and has duly signed them off as being a true representation of our current status. She mentioned that the cheque for the new repeater fell outside of this financial year – approximately £800.00

#### Nominations and Election of Officers:-

The Chairman, Secretary, Treasurer and auditor indicated their willingness to stand for a further year and there were no other proposals so they were proposed on block by G1VGI, 2<sup>nd</sup> by 2E0BCM and carried by all.

Chairman	G8XOR
Secretary	G7CIY
Treasurer	M1NIZ
Auditor	G7DWN

#### Additional positions within SARG are:

<b>Repeater Keeper</b> GB3PO, GB3IH	– Keith Gaunt – G7CIY
<b>Repeater Keeper</b> GB3EF	– Iain Moffat – G0OZS
<b>Repeater Keeper</b> GB3EA, GB3EZ	– Jake Bevan – G1YFF
<b>Repeater Keeper</b> GB7MK, GB7AL	– Mark Austin – M1NIZ
<b>Technical Officer</b>	– Jake Bevan – G1YFF
<b>Web Site</b>	– Chris Barber – M7CBX
<b>Publicity/Fund Raiser</b>	– Steve Friend – 2E0TDN

## **Repeater News and Updates:**

### **GB3PO**

As mentioned, thanks to Jake, the Group has sourced a replacement Icom repeater and it was on demonstration at the meeting. Everyone, including myself was amazed how small the unit was. Jake thought that the lead time for getting it installed would be between two and three months. However, there would be a number of tasks to be completed first. We agreed that we should meet and draw up a hit list of things we need to do – sooner rather than later. **(AP)**  
Jake mentioned that communications within the committee in the past had not been very good, but with the use of WhatsApp, this has made a huge difference.

**G1YFF:** After much research and many false starts we identified the Icom FR5300 VHF repeater as right for the new GB3PO, however as with so many other manufactures No Stock.  
BUT the Icom Base can host another radio module, Icom UK did have Stock of this (UR-FR5300) one was duly purchased and work on turning it to an Amateur Repeater started.

The initial approach to connecting the radio with the New PO couldn't work due to a bug in the Icom Firmware. Icom UK are working with me to resolve this and we have a new approach that has now been proven  
The logic and radio have been connected and the hardware is working as expected  
The Software has been re-written to sought out the ID and Time Out timings and a few other bug fixes...  
The Logic is small enough to be housed in the expansion slot in the FR 5300  
there's a little more work to do I hope this won't take too long...  
The Icom based PO was demonstrated at the AGM  
As far as we know this the first time in the UK at least a FR5300 has been used for an amateur repeater  
I'd like to thank Icom UK for the support and advice with the project.

Whist building the New PO I've been asked a few times why couldn't the repeater be used as is, after all it has CW-ID and works as a repeater out the box? True BUT a PMR repeater will allow access if revives a valid signal that may be weak and of short duration. The Time Out Timer works on the TX Key down, no courtesy tones and the CW ID will override all audio.

For a ham repeater the Logic has to :-  
Manage the access and so only an intentional signal opens the repeater, only have pips if the overs are of "QSO" length - this means that a choppy signal resets the time out timer but get no pip - if that's you your weak in ;)  
The Time out timer works on how long the received signal is present for PO it will be 3 minutes  
the CW-ID is programmed every 15 minutes with the audio level lowered if the repeater is in use.  
ID's sent when the repeater is not in use won't have CTCSS encode.

That's why you can't buy a Ham repeater off the shelf ...

### **GB3EA/EZ**

EA Carries on, however the performance is not so good, a project to replace EA has been started, Phase 1 will be to install a new duplexer that's been built By Phil G8MLA for the group, and it should work better. Phase 2 - build a new repeater to be installed at the same time, hopefully in the next few months.  
EZ - Recent failure was caused by the power supply mains switch - on site spare used. There is a known issue with the CTCSS encoder it's planned to upgrade EZ this will resolve the issue but no time scales.

### **GB3IH**

GB3IH continues to run well. We still have the CTCSS issue, but this will be fixed on the next visit

### **GB7MK**

2E0DWU mentioned that MK was “crackly” when it rained, but apparently this issue was some time ago. No other issues reported. Dave and Iain have a filter which will fix the de-sense issue.

## **GB7AL**

No reported issues

## **GB3EF**

The tower at Mendlesham will be out of bounds until later in the year as it will be handed over to contractors to paint the tower and only they will have sole access until the work is completed and handed back to BT. This is to ensure compliance with the Terms and Conditions of the warranty given by the Contractor on completion of the work. We are therefore looking at August/September for fitting the aerial.

The poor receive issue appears to have gone away. We think it may be due to condensation build up in the antenna or feeder. We suspect the latter as we did a distance to fault test which found a problem about ¼ way to the antenna where there is a joint. Currently the repeater is working well, despite it being on low power.

2E0DIQ asked if he could start running nets again as he was worried that use of the repeater might damage it. Iain stated that it was running low power, so it should be well protected.

## **GB7PP**

Unfortunately, G0FEA has made the decision to shut down the repeater permanently. Both G0OZS and 2E0DIQ who live very close had never made successful QSO's through the repeater. The Group thanks Keith – G0FEA for his time, patience and hard work trying to get it to work.

### **Web Site News and feedback:**

Chris was unable to be at the meeting. His wife has just had a baby, so his time is often taken with other things. It was noted that we must have someone else who can access the site to update it. Also, G7CIY said that he currently did not have access to the mailing list, but Chris had a way around this. We just need some time when we are both free. (AP)

## **AOB**

Steve circulated the design for the SARG car sticker. The price per unit worked out at about 15p so the meeting gave approval for us to go ahead and arrange. The plan would be to give every donator a free sticker and then charge for a second one. (AP)

Thanks were noted to G0OZS for arranging the venue and to both G7CIY & G0OZS for the refreshments.

### **Date and venue of next meeting:-**

The hall had only been booked to 9pm, so we had to wrap up business fairly sharply. The date of the next meeting will be around the end of April 2024, date to be advised.

Keith Gaunt – G7CIY  
SARG Secretary  
27<sup>th</sup> April 2023

## **Summary of outstanding actions from this meeting**

- 06/22 G0OZS to drive forward replacement of GB3EF antenna and get repeater back up to full strength – noted this is likely to be Aug/Sep 2023
- 01/23 2E0TDN and M1NIZ to liaise and find out if there was any better way of keeping SARG funds.
- 02/23 SARG Committee to arrange planning meeting ASAP for all the up and coming tasks. Separate Actions List will be drawn up
- 03/23 G7CIY to liaise with M7CBX to get access to mailing list and some sort of edit ability to Web Site
- 04/23 2E0TDN to arrange purchase and printing of car stickers
- 05/23 M1NIZ, 2E0TDN and G7CIY to come up with a way to thank SARG supporters and send them a car sticker