



Maritime and Coastguard Agency

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Cllr Michael Saltern
Strategy and Commissioning
Follaton House
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Totnes
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7th August 2015

Dear Cllr Saltern

Thank you for your letter dated 13th July 2015 in respect of the South Hams District Council Overview and Scrutiny Panel's interest HM Coastguard Services.

I understand your members' disappointment that I was unable to attend your meeting on 9 July 2015 to discuss their concerns. However, as you have kindly forwarded me an outline of these I am happy to address them in this correspondence. Please find these attached.

Rather than I attend your next meeting I believe it would more beneficial for both parties for representatives of the Panel to meet myself at the CGOC in Falmouth. This will enable me to give you an overview of the new Coastguard arrangements and show you how the South Hams area is being managed.

If you let me know your availability I will liaise with the Maritime Operations Controller in Falmouth to arrange this.

Yours sincerely,

Helen Hutson
Divisional Commander South West

HM Coastguard Response to South Hams District Council Overview and Scrutiny Panel

| Query | Response |
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| <p>Who do local boats call up on the radio for radio checks? There is a lot of confusion. HM Coastguard should have a PR drive.</p> | <p>Members of the public can call any CG station for a radio check. Calls to stations which are now closed will still be answered by operators in Falmouth or the National Maritime Operational Centre in Fareham. All previous aerals are still in use and are utilised by the national network. Press releases have been issued after each closure or alteration to the Coastguard national network.</p> |
| <p>There is a delay in paging crews after a 999 call and this has been up to 20 minutes when there is life in danger.</p> | <p>Please can you provide details of these so that we can look into them? These can then be reviewed by our operational managers.</p> |
| <p>I read in the local newspaper that fire crews have come from Camel Head, Plymouth, and ambulance crews have come from Exeter. Why local resources aren't used e.g. coastguards in the area.</p> | <p>Coastguard Teams are always used depending on the skills required for each incident. Most incident require a multi-disciplined response utilising skills and equipment from partner emergency services. The response will match the needs of the casualty.</p> |
| <p>How many people are covering the South Hams? How many people are covering Torbay?</p> | <p>There is a Coastal Management Team of 6 officers who manage the Coastguard Rescue Teams in South Devon, providing training, equipment management and support to all the volunteers.</p> <p>Maritime co-ordination is delivered by teams of officers working with in the national network; this will be Falmouth Coastguard Operations Centre (CGOC) with support available from the National Maritime Operations Centre and the other CGOCs in the network. The number of officers assigned to the teams in this area will vary in accordance with need.</p> |
| <p>Please outline the process for a 999 HM Coastguard call.</p> | <p>A 999 call will be received in an operations room and Coastguard officers will gather information and assess the required mission. Units will be tasked depending on the mission and the officers in the</p> |

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| | operations room will co-ordinate all assets tasked during the course of the mission. |
| When a team is tasked to do a search or cliff rescue it is HMCG protocol to task the flank team. This has failed to happen numerous times. Why? | Each Coastguard Rescue Team is trained and equipped to complete a rescue on their own. Flank teams are tasked to ensure that adequate numbers of trained volunteers are available to undertake a technical rescue. There may be occasions when a flank team is not required, such as a simple search of the coastline. The officer in charge of a rescue can always request further back up if he/she feels it necessary. |
| When the coastguard vehicle is on patrol it was HMCG requirement for the vehicle to call in hourly when on the highway and half hourly when off road. This was always a safety requirement which now seems to be discouraged. Why? | Comms checks can be undertaken whenever the operations room or the teams feel it necessary, depending on the circumstances (i.e weather, terrain etc.). Any concerns from the teams should be passed through their Senior Coastal Operations Officer |
| Why do Solent and Falmouth control centres no longer monitor Channel 0 as well as Channel 16? There have been numerous complaints from the local teams being unable to call for back up from other teams. | Channel 0 is monitored as required. Any concerns from the teams should be passed through their SCOO. |
| Are you satisfied with the support you give to your local coastguard volunteers? | The MCA has increased the number of supporting officers in South Devon, from 4 to 6, providing additional training, exercise, equipment maintenance, property management and supervision during incident working. An on call rota has been introduced, providing a full time officer available 24/7 to support volunteers during incident working and out of hours issues. Each Coastguard Rescue Team has a nominated SCOO, who works with the team to ensure that our Coastguard Rescue Teams received the appropriate level of support and development. |