

From the Lookout

NCI Wells-next-the-Sea
Newsletter



Chairman's Column

Welcome to 'From the Lookout'.

This is the first edition of what we hope will be a regular newsletter. We intend it to be a means by which the committee can share what is going on with NCI (Wells) as well as report any new initiatives and events. We hope that all volunteers not only enjoy reading the latest 'news' but will also be prepared to contribute items regarding NCI (Wells). The intention is to further communication in every respect and for this to happen we need as many contributors as possible.

By the time you read this the flare exercise organised by Tony Garbutt (the North Norfolk MCA Sector Manager) involving the local Auxiliary Coastguard, the RNLI and MCA at Yarmouth and volunteers from Wells Coastwatch will have been completed. Whilst you can read about the success of the event elsewhere I am especially pleased to be able to report that both MCA and RNLI have a growing regard for the role we play. This is due to the hard work and commitment of our members and I know that I have your support in doing all we can to maintain our progress - thank you.

Don't forget, we need your contributions to this newsletter, please contact Rob Palethorpe with any suggestions.

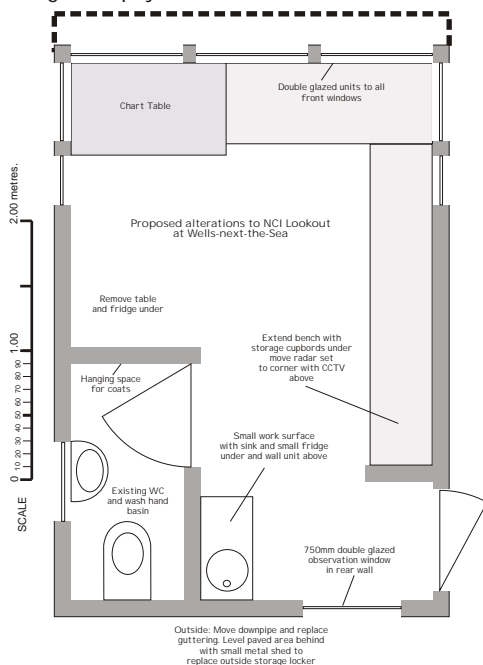
Dennis Woods

The Sheringham Shoal Windfarm Project

Dredging work on the Wells Harbour channel and building work on the new pontoons at Buxtons Bight is due to start in October this year. We have agreed to house GPS equipment for use during the dredging work and CCTV security cameras for the project. A plan for major improvements to the lookout to help us carry out this extra responsibility has been presented to the manager of the Wells Harbour Channel Deepening Project, who has discussed it with SCIRA who in turn have sent it to Statoil Hydro in Norway for discussion by their directors.

9 July 2009 UPDATE! Whilst writing this I got a phone call from Sue Vincent at SCIRA to say that she had just heard from Statoil Hydro that they will agree to pay for all of this work.

Peter Henley



Drama in the fog

At 10.17 on Friday 26 June a Mayday was heard from rib 'Seaweed' Capsized, believed 5 miles off Wells, four p.o.b. all safe on up-turned hull'. Answered immediately by CGY. Within 2 minutes another rib 'Jakey Boy' called CGY to report that he was alongside and taking crew aboard his vessel. He gave CGY a lat/long position which we plotted that gave him on a bearing of 009° at 1.75nm from the lookout. Wells IRB and the AWB were launched to recover casualties and the capsized rib. All very exciting stuff except that in 100 metres visibility we couldn't see a damn thing!

Peter Henley



Your committee

The committee elected in May have now met twice and have discussed a range of areas concerning NCI both locally and nationally. Each member of the committee has now assumed their role and responsibilities and will hopefully enjoy the challenge of the year ahead.

Dennis Woods	Chair / Roster / Local & External Liaison
Peter Henley	V. Chair / Maintenance / Communications
Alan Ducker	Training Officer
Lynn Marr	Health & Safety / Child protection
David Wickens	Station Records Officer / Venues
Roy Masters	Emergency Response Team
Rob Palethorpe	Quartermaster / Fund Raising / Newsletter

We are always aware of the need to keep you as informed as possible. Hopefully this newsletter might help - hope you like it!

Home Office UK Border Agency

On 30 June, Dennis Woods and I met with three representatives of the Home Office UK Border Agency at the look-out. They requested the meeting and travelled all the way from Felixstowe to see what we do. From April 2008 the UKBA has brought together the work of the Border & Immigration Agency, UK visas and elements of HM Revue & Customs. (Some of you may have seen their cutter anchored off the entrance to Wells.)

The meeting was excellent and gave them opportunity to outline information we might pass to them. Defining what information to report is not easy as essentially they are interested in any unusual vessel activity. However we do have the existing MOU between NCI and the Home Office Border and Control Agency which contains guidance for NCI watch-keepers. This has recently been posted in the Look-out and all watch-keepers are advised to read the advice it contains.

If you do observe anything suspicious you should telephone the UK Border Agency on their: Mobile 07775 410 904 or office number 01394 303 254

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The leaflet adjacent to the door of the Look-out provides the Customs Hotline; Freephone 0800 595 000 which is to be used if you wish to report any intelligence confidentially eg. 'Something you might have heard in the pub' etc.!

Alan Ducker

Morrison's Collection & The Albatross

Grateful thanks to those members who gave up their time to assemble at Morrison's in Fakenham during the first weekend of June. They collected over £870 for NCI (Wells) during that time, thanks especially to the kindness of those who shop at the store.

All those collecting will have their own stories but I was personally involved in numerous conversations with both local shoppers and holiday makers regarding our work. Many were quick to acknowledge those who 'man the little wooden hut' at Wells and were very complementary about the important role we fill, especially when they learned that we are all volunteers. Many spoke sincerely about the job we do and showed true appreciation by giving so willingly. I must confess I shall find it difficult to walk past another charity collector again!

All aboard The Albatross! A beautiful, still July evening was perfect for the opportunity to board The Albatross and enjoy conversation and refreshment (a pint!) with Coastwatch colleagues. The evening was spent either chatting on deck or venturing below to enjoy the music provided by 'Exit'. Grateful thanks to Del Loydall for organising the evening, which raised £90 towards local NCI funds.

Rob Palethorpe

Wells NCI 40 Club

Last year's 40 Club distributed prizes of almost £200 whilst contributing a similar amount towards NCI (Wells) funds thanks to your willingness to contribute. Congratulations to those who won especially those who won twice! It's my turn next year!

There are already more members signed up for the second year, which means the monthly prizes will be increased. If anyone has not joined and still wishes to there is still time - please contact Rob Palethorpe.

JULY WINNERS

Peter Henley - £15.00

Gavin Goudie - £5.00

Spotting flares with style

Not the white flares you might have worn in the 60's to be 'hip' but star and parachute flares used at sea to avoid collisions or on land to illuminate a search area or respond to a red flare to indicate the distress signal has been seen.



Exercise 'Elmo's Fire' was held on Tuesday 7 July around the high water period of 20:00 hours. Twelve watch keepers volunteered for the exercise which involved making 8 reports to MRCC at Yarmouth of white flares and one report of a casualty drifting in a dinghy. Flares were observed over the marshes to the south of the Lookout, from the sand dunes to the west of the beach and offshore. The remaining flares were launched in front of the Lookout so we could see them close up.

The watch keepers worked in pairs and took turns at spotting and

reporting. The exercise was conducted in three sections with feedback given as to the accuracy of the reports at the end of each section by Tony Garbutt the Coastguard North Norfolk Sector Manager. At the conclusion of the exercise Dennis Woods and I went to a debriefing at the Lifeboat House with the NNSM and the RNLI to discuss the lessons learnt.

All the watch keepers who took part are to be congratulated. The feedback from the MRCC at Yarmouth indicated the reporting was accurate, timely and well made with good answers to their questions. (It is interesting to note that of the 12 watch keepers taking part only 4 have more than 1 years experience and of the remainder 5 have less than 6 months experience.) Tony Garbutt was extremely positive in his feedback and very impressed at our turnout and overall performance.

This meant that Dennis and I went to the final debrief meeting with our heads held high and very proud of how the watch keepers had performed. When we meet with HMCG and the RNLI we really do feel like equal members of one big team.

It was a very enjoyable and beneficial exercise, well organised and supported by HMCG, the RNLI and ourselves. Naturally we asked to be included in any future joint exercises - so keep watching the Lookout notice board.

Alan Ducker



Newly Accredited Watchkeepers

In the early part of the year we were very successful in recruiting new members so much so that we had to open a waiting list as we had so many people to train. After a successful programme in the spring the backlog of new watchkeepers for training is now cleared and we are again recruiting.

These watchkeepers have been recently accredited:

March: Di BROWN, John BLAKELEY, David CAMP, Ian RUSTON

May: Kay ALDINGTON, Audrey COX, Jennifer SHAW, Martin TAYLOR

June: Anne HALLETT, Sonia HULL.

Congratulations to you all!

Wells Police 'Hotline'

During early July Peter Henley, Dennis Woods and I met PC Clare Singh and Sgt. Andy Smith to discuss a number of issues.

We used the opportunity to explain how difficult it is for watch-keepers to contact the local police. Both officers agreed to a suggestion that the duty PC at Wells should carry a mobile phone specifically for that purpose purely as a 'hotline' for us. *This is already in place - the number to use is 07500 125 925.*

We also discussed their ideas about training a few watch-keepers as 'Seafront Liaison Volunteers'. How this might work we are not completely clear but through the committee we agreed that a trial of the idea might be beneficial.

The Norfolk Constabulary also have opportunities for anyone wishing to support them by delivering police cars or boats. Details have been posted in the Look-out.

Alan Ducker