

November 2007 Flood Alert

NORFOLK COUNTY RAYNET

Great Yarmouth, North Norfolk Sea Coast Flood Alert, Thursday 8th and Friday 9th November, 2007.

At approx 1030 on Thursday 8th of November 2007, I was asked to urgently contact Inspector Hooton at Gt Yarmouth Police station, re flooding. This resulted in attending the first Silver Command meeting at 1230 at Gt. Yarmouth Police Station. This was followed by further meetings at 1600 and 1900. The outcome for RAYNET was that our help would definitely be needed and that I would need to call members out, initially for 0400 hours, approx 3 ½ hours before the time of the predicted highest water.

Following the 1230 meeting, contact was made with M1CQS, Graham Broadland Controller asking him to place around 6 members of Broadland Group on alert for the early hours of Friday morning, as it was uncertain at the time of the numbers of RAYNET members who would be required or for the length of time. The following members were contacted and placed on call out notice for 0400, Friday, 2E0ILH, Ian, 2E0BNT, Bruce, M3TFQ, Stewart and M3TFZ, Eddy who would be able to give us reports from his work location near the Harbour Mouth.

MOCNP, David, was also contacted and asked if he had been alerted by JOC North Walsham. He hadn't at this time, and asked if he was if he could organise members for North Norfolk, as the deputy controller, G4PSH, Terry, was ill and wouldn't be able to respond. I informed him that I was making contact with the southern most members of the North Norfolk group - M3JST, James (put on alert), 2E1BNA, Sue and 2E1EIV, Alec, neither of whom I was able to contact.

Initially the plan was for the Yarmouth group to be at the police station for 0400 along with control. This plan changed after being contacted by M1CQS and being informed of the opening of North Walsham JOC and County Hall Norwich . G7UCC (G4TWT, Bill). County Hall requested that we man 5 rest centres from 0300 and with help from Broadland, - West Flegg Middle (now Martham Primary School), Caister High, Wroughton Junior, Oriel High, and Cliff Park were manned by GOSMS (Dianne), 2E1HAO (Shirley), G8UJO (Barry) & M3NLK (Nigel), 2E0ILH Ian and M3TFQ (Eddy) respectively. 2E0BNT (Bruce) joined control at 0400 at the JOC, Gt. Yarmouth. I was also able to ask M3JST (James) to remain on standby, and if not contacted by 1200 on the Friday to stand down. I was able to give the same message to G7UVY (Colin) who had been able to offer the possibility of boat assistance.

RAYNET control at Gt. Yarmouth went on air at 0155 on 144.650, contacting G7UCC (County Hall), and G7RNN (JOC North Walsham). Although G7RNN was in contact with GOUIQ (Billy) and MOEBN (Simon) on the North Norfolk Coast outstations nothing could be heard from them at Gt. Yarmouth. Gt. Yarmouth control moved to 144.625 as arranged for the duration of the callout, with the exception of the occasional move to 144.650 to pass information to G7UCC (Bill G4TWT/Shelagh G4TWS and to enquire what was happening with G7RNN. This proved to be good practise as although we have done com checks in the past, we have not (to my knowledge) attempted to work controls from inside rest centre buildings, on reduced power handhelds. The result was that several stations did have significant QRM and weak signals to control unless they left the building / used their mobile set in their cars. It is my view that things would not have worked as well as they did if we'd had all control stations on the same frequency - as it was we did have occasional doubling on 144.625 between manned stations and outside stations and it should be emphasised that other stations wishing to contact either control or a manned station should give their call sign and standby for control acknowledgement to go ahead.

JOC North Walsham N Norfolk Group members on standby at 1800hrs advised by JOC

Silver Command (PC G Hewitt) that RAYNET required at 0200hrs with outstations at Cley and Salthouse Green. Broadland Controller advised to standby if required. At 0145 MOCNP David arrived at JOC N Walsham (as Terry G4PSH was sick) David would now act as RAYNET Depcon at JOC G7RNN. MOEBN at Cley and GOUIQ at Salthouse for 0200. Communications established to County Hall G7UCC and JOC Gt Yarmouth on 144.650, Also Radio Checks made at intervals with Salthouse, Cley, JOC Gt Yarmouth and County Hall. Awaiting further instructions from Silver Command which never came and at 0655 JOC N Walsham Closed down with no major evacuations or sea wall breaches on the North Norfolk Coast but Sea and River flooding was bad in a few known areas including Walcott Beach Road.

As the night/morning progressed, RAYNET reported the first breach in the Gt Yarmouth Harbour area and perhaps more significantly were able to report up to date information on conditions and numbers at the rest centres, which was able to be immediately and acted upon. Just after 0600, 2E0BNT replaced M3TFQ at Cliff Park, having already done sterling work at control in both keeping G7VAH awake and being an excellent scribe!

GOMNX (John) was also deployed to South Norfolk Council Offices to cover GOSNR if required. 0730, and the peak of the flood approached and there was a notable calmness in the JOC, as it was finally realised that the defences had, in the main, held and that shortly people could start to return to their homes, their adventures over for one night!

The next 3 ½ hours saw mainly traffic concerning shortages of things like lack of numbers, food, blankets changing to soap and towels and at Caister Eva Centre running out of nappies to finally is our road flooded and is there any transport available. Social Services were certainly kept on their toes!

We closed our first station at 0905 due to manning problems, followed by West Flegg, and Caister, finally Oriol and Wroughton were stood down at 1100 as although they still had evacuees present, JOC Gt. Yarmouth was being closed so that Police personnel could be re-located to Bethel Street Norwich, to open the JOC there to deal with expected flooding in the Norwich area.

After reporting in to G7UCC (now M1CQS), G7VAH closed RAYNET control Gt. Yarmouth at 11.05 - just over 24 hours since being called out.

As a result of this callout, there are several issues which have been raised by members and by control which are to be reported to the next Admin meeting and hopefully will be resolved/acted upon to improve the service we can give in times of emergency.

G7VAH, Steve, Controller North Norfolk & Gt. Yarmouth Groups, Norfolk County RAYNET.

From a personal side, I would like to thank all members who turned out in pretty unsociable hours for a long period of time, without sleep and made my job easier by helping me along. Also those who were on alert but who didn't get the call - if things had gone differently, you would have, if only to relieve some very tired people - here's hoping that the next call out is no more serious than this one turned out to be.

P. S. I apologise if I've missed you out - time went so fast and sleep didn't but I think I've remembered everything!
Steve G7VAH N Norfolk/Gt Yarmouth Controller