



# MIDLAND RESPONDER

## Newsletter of MROC 4x4 Response

August 2015

Working together – Saving lives, reducing harm

Issue No 1

**WELCOME** to the first edition of Midland Responder; the purpose of this newsletter is to keep us all up to date with things of interest that are happening or have happened in the group. In doing so, I should also be able to cut down on the quantity of e-mails sent out to you, many of which are news or information items, and instead include some of that info within the newsletter which will be published as and when the need arises – this will vary and may be 2, 3 or 4 times a year.

Although at the moment put together by myself, it can in addition be a source of group interaction so please feel at liberty to send anything you would like to contribute and share.

**John Kesterton**

**Website:** Remember our website contains lots of useful info such as flood alerts in the Midlands, handy links, photo albums and a shop page. [www.mroc4x4response.co.uk](http://www.mroc4x4response.co.uk)

**Facebook** : Our Facebook page has been up and running for a while now and is there to be used by any of you for general chit-chat and discussion; set up as a closed group so posts can only be read by members and not the whole world.

The page can be found at: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/1493898804198499/>

**PRESS OFFICER** We are pleased to announce that Graeme Wright has volunteered to take on the role of press and publicity for the response group and wish him well with this new position. This is a job that had been very effectively covered in the early days by Mike Hayes as part of his P&P committee position for MROC, since then followed by myself muddling through, along with some very significant and constructive input, articles and live interviews from Ruth Smith. It has to be said that Ruth took this on not as a job but purely to help the group when we were busy for which we owe her our gratitude, and I'm sure she would happily do so again if that need arises.

For press related matters Graeme can be contacted at [press@mroc4x4response.co.uk](mailto:press@mroc4x4response.co.uk) and I've no doubt would welcome any photo's from those times when we are tasked; suitable photo's sent to me can also be put on our website along with all of the others.

**2 WAY RADIOS** As you are all now aware we have been awarded £8017 funding from The Big Lottery and together with £1000 from the local authority matched by £1000 from MROC, we now have the funds to purchase the radios. They operate like the Airwave radios that the blue light services use - Airwave uses Tetra which is a trunked radio system that spans the whole country – ours will span as much of the UK as there are repeaters, presently the greater Midlands area. For us and the CSW area we may use repeaters at Birdlip, Malvern, Leicester, Atherstone, Rugby, Warwick and Clee Hill with the one at Clee being the main one and the most powerful.



The system is similar to the Tetra trunked system because you won't have to select a repeater – the radio will automatically select the closest or strongest signal and comms are then passed from one repeater to another until they reach the recipient. These are very easy to operate – simply 'push to talk'.

They will be Motorola handsets and will be issued for you to keep while you are a response member, the benefits being:

- quicker and easier to use than mobile phone, especially in an emergency
- exceeds Home Office guidelines for use in and around sensitive areas
- approved for transmission of secure data
- members will be able to hear all communications between control and drivers
- backed up by a resilient network of repeaters covering the whole of the CSW area
- not affected by power cuts or the turning off of mobile masts

More detail when they have been purchased and ready for distribution (yes there will be a meeting where all your questions can be answered and the system explained) but at the moment we still have more trials to do across the region though I would hope to have radios purchased and issued before next winter. In the meantime if you have any concerns or queries then please point them in my direction.

## **CVEC (COUNTY VOLUNTEERS EMERGENCY COMMITTEE)**

Earlier this year we joined our local CVEC and are now regularly participating as active members.

**What is CVEC?** All counties in England have these committees and they are set up to provide a platform which will allow those voluntary organisations that have an emergency response function within their relevant regional area to work alongside each other and the county resilience team before during and after an emergency.

**What is the aim?** To allow voluntary organisations that have an emergency response function within the Coventry, Solihull & Warwickshire sub-region to work alongside each other and the CSW Resilience Team before during and after an emergency.

**What are the objectives?** To provide a networking opportunity for relevant personnel from those voluntary organisations within the CSW sub-region that have an emergency planning/ response/ resilience function, and to facilitate the sharing of joint training and exercising opportunities within the voluntary sector.

This is just one of the ways that work goes on behind the scenes in an effort to progress the group; the idea of CVEC is to try to achieve a bringing together of all voluntary organisations in the area who may be used by CSW; this helps to introduce faces to names and also provides an area where groups can discuss anything response related with a view to improving interoperability and, if necessary, working practices and procedures. CVEC sits between the User Services (LA's & blue light people) and the LRF's (Local Resilience Forum) although some people who attend CVEC may also sit on the LRF.

**INTEROPERABILITY** is a buzzword that's been around for a while now and one you will have often seen if reading the Emergency Services Times. The Civil Contingencies Act 2004 is the legislation that started to bring all services, agencies or organisations that may be affected by any civil emergency together as regarding their emergency preparedness to establish a clear set of roles and responsibilities for those involved in emergency preparation and response at the local level. For some time the 'blue light services' have progressed this between themselves and tended to not include others in their principles of joint working. However, the Home Office has informed them that, "if they don't voluntarily roll this out across the country then they will be forced to do so" as, in any incident, any service may call on specialist resources such as flood

response or rope rescue teams etc.

In addition local authorities, utility and transport companies as well as private sector operators of critical infrastructure may be involved, and each organisation brings their own expertise to that situation. All those involved need to be included to ensure that services work together better and consistently by setting a national standard as the actions of one organisation may affect another when dealing with multi agency incidents.

So that framework is now cascading all the way down to voluntary organisations to enable a common format across the UK in how a local area should respond to and coordinate a multi-agency response to an emergency or civil unrest in their area. And as far as we are concerned that is what may be meant by interoperability although presently there is still a great deal of inconsistency across the country. Quite simply, interoperability is defined as the extent to which organisations can work together coherently as a matter of routine.

**EASYFUNDRAISING** have just informed us that “Your wonderful supporters have raised **£18.02** for MROC 4x4 RESPONSE this quarter”. This brings the total raised so far to **£182.86** Please remember to use this scheme when purchasing goods online from sooooo many places, and if you haven’t joined up yet then seriously consider doing so. The funds all go into the group to help with running costs and the effort required when making an online purchase is really minimal.

Details at: <http://www.easyfundraising.org.uk/causes/mroc4x4/?t=Easyfundraising-lo&v=a>

**PRACTICAL TRAINING** is something that we have wanted to implement for some time but the lack of suitable land is always a problem and continues to be so. Thanks to efforts by John Chesters we are hoping that, for this year at least, there can be a practical training day maybe on a Sunday in November on land near Nuneaton.

The use of this land will be at no cost to the group courtesy of the landowners and will give us all a chance to practice and hone our driving, towing and recovery skills (with hopefully a little winching practice including safety procedures to show and educate those of you that aren’t aware). Ideally, when tasked, any winching operation would be carried out with an assistant so even if you don’t have a winch, that knowledge could be extremely useful. As some of you don’t get or haven’t had much opportunity to utilise your 4x4 in off road situations then this training day is an ideal opportunity, one not to be missed, and will form part of the groups refresher courses.

**WATER AWARENESS COURSE** was discussed earlier this year and can be complimentary to what we do as a group. Glyn Phillips has kindly offered his services to run a course for us and is well placed and experienced to do this, and although the course won’t be certificated, the end result will be the same.

Glyn has been involved with working near water all of his life as a canal manager, and also involved with a voluntary organisation operating a trip boat for special needs people. He is a qualified trainer and examiner for community boat skippers and water safety covers a large part of that. As part of his training programme the skipper has to show they can deal with a man overboard at the same time as controlling a 70 foot canal boat.

Hopefully something can be arranged for later on this year.

**4X4 RESPONSE UK** have their AGM at 2pm on Saturday 3<sup>rd</sup> October at the Heritage Motor Centre, Gaydon. This is open to any member of a 4x4 response group but only groups or individuals who are members may vote. 4x4 Response UK is the umbrella organisation for all UK response groups; their forum is at <http://www.4x4response.info/> and can be a useful source of information as regards other responders and their groups. Forum membership is a simple sign up process.