



MIDLAND RESPONDER

Newsletter of MROC 4x4 Response

December 2017

Working together – Saving lives, reducing harm

Issue No 5

WELCOME to the fifth edition of Midland Responder.

The newsletter can be a source of group interaction so please feel at liberty to send in any items that you would like to contribute and share.

Website: Our website contains lots of useful info such as Midlands flood alerts, photo albums, handy links, newsletters and a shop page: www.mroc4x4response.co.uk
The members area holds documents and information, accessed by password.

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/>

PRACTICAL TRAINING DAY

The first to be held on our own training ground and was very successful; a large number of attendees so we split into 3 groups with basic off road driving techniques being practiced and/or taught for the morning session and after lunch we headed into the woods where a small group were tasked with recovering a dead vehicle from a wet and muddy section. A write up in the journal covered the event in more detail and everybody enjoyed the day. Further training is ongoing for those that couldn't attend but may I remind you – EVERYBODY must complete these courses and refreshers.

The next training day will be on Sunday 21st January. As well as a few members receiving their training we are opening up the ground for any response member that wishes to come along for a few hours or even just an hour or two, have a drive around, touch up on your skills, have some fun, practice your recovery techniques etc; there will be experienced members on site to help if you are not sure and need a little advice. The ground has been altered since you last visited and hopefully improved – see 'Training Ground Update' below.

FIRST AID COURSE

The course was in November with a fair number of members attending; a shame that all couldn't make it as we only do this every 3 years.

Held in one of the Solihull Civic Centre rooms courtesy of the Local Authority and run by FastAid headed up by Jeffrey Way who is not only a response member but also a First Responder with FastAid, attendees were asked to make a donation to their group, itself a registered charity. Our thanks to all their team members for donating their time.

CSW WORKSHOP

CSW have recently developed a training package which aims to give an introduction to emergency planning & response provision in an interactive and accessible way and hopefully should give attendees a better understanding of how much goes on behind the scenes and the appropriate voluntary sector response. Many of our team were able to attend the planned evening session and hopefully should have gained some insight into

- An increased understanding of the different roles and responsibilities of partner agencies
- A broad understanding of legislation in relation to emergency planning
- An understanding of emergency response

Tom Knibbs (CSW Senior Emergency Planning Officer) put together a 'slimmed down' version specifically to enable as many of you as possible to have the chance to attend and understand some of what happens in the background of what we do as a response group.

RADIO NETWORK

We have had our radios for 2 years and to date use of the Sarcomm network and their licence has not cost our group as at the time of purchase I agreed a deal with them whereby we would provide a degree of advertising and also help from me to encourage other groups to come on board. Sarcomm have now had to increase their fees considerably to all groups to enable investment in more equipment on an ongoing basis; after much negotiation I have agreed an excellent rate for the near future and this will guarantee our further use of the network.

However, we are left with a small cash shortfall that external funding organisations will not cover – this amounts to around £400 per year. We seriously need to look at raising funds in a similar way to other groups and the easiest way may be to get involved with one or two public events per year. An example of this would be marshalling a bonfire event, car park duties etc and one day's work could raise several hundred pounds.

Can you all please give some thought as to what and where we may involve ourselves, even take the liberty of making initial enquiries if you feel able. Personally I don't want to go down the route of bucket rattling as this nets a minimum income for a large number of hours worked.

This is important and one way or another we need to raise this money annually.

RSPCA UPDATE

As you know, we have an agreement with the RSPCA (Midlands) to provide transport for personnel, equipment and towing of trailers should they need our assistance. I have recently re-confirmed our position with them and the only reason they have not called upon our services so far is simply that they have had no need. But we are still on their register for emergency help and Midland Superintendants are well aware of our availability and capability.

Welcome new members

Since the last newsletter we welcome Mathew Boyce and Andrew Neale.

TRAINING GROUND UPDATE

As most of you are aware, the ground works hadn't been completed so in November we hired in some plant with which we intended to progress the work over a period of seven consecutive days. The cost of the plant was met by funding from The Big Lottery and four of us (myself, Phil, Richard & Jim) planned to spend every day at the ground to complete as much as possible assisted over the weekend by Nat, David and John Chesters.

The routes through the woods were enhanced with several dips and holes and the cross axle sections re-worked, while the two bridges over the stream were dismantled and the stream crossings both now need to be forded with the water levels controlled by a simple sluice upstream.

The side slope in the field has been extended significantly to provide a better experience; the large hill required extensive work to increase its height, drain the water from the bottom with a natural gradient and re-work the embankment. A lot of earth was moved to facilitate this and 20t of stone dropped in the ground at the bottom of the hill.

Most work was completed after 5 days but the spoil at the top of the large hill became too soft to allow further work to continue with the result that it presently is not suitable for driving on until such time as it drains and compacts.

Edited by John Kesterton