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Minutes of the meeting of the Offshore Industry Advisory Committee held on
11 November 2009 in Lord Cullen House, Aberdeen

ATTENDEES

Present

Steve Walker, Chairman, HSE
Lyndsey Bennett, Secretariat, HSE
Jim Neilson, HSE
Peter Mills, HSE
Julie Voce, Chair of WIG, HSE
Fraser Easton, HSE
Edmund Brookes, BROA
Jane Bugler, IMCA
Andrew Campbell, WSCA
Bert Droy, DNV (attending on behalf of Graham Duff)
Allan Graveson, Nautilus UK
Bob Kyle, O&GUK (attending on behalf of Robert Paterson)
John Monks, IADC
Phil Ley, OCA
Neaz Hyder, MCA
Jake Molloy, RMT
Brian Negus, GMB
John Taylor, Unite (TGWU)

Observers

None

Apologies

John Arnott, DECC
Susan Elston, COTA
Mark Robinson, Unite (Amicus Section)
Ian Tasker, STUC

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1	Introduction, apologies and minutes from last meeting	
1.1	Steve Walker welcomed everyone to the meeting.	
1.2	Steve welcomed new member, Neaz Hyder from MCA. Neaz has replaced Duncan MacDonald who retired in October.	
1.3	Steve went on to introduce himself as the new Chair of OIAC and explained to members that he has replaced Ian Whewell as Head of OSD. Steve provided members with a small insight into his background saying that he has worked in HSE for 30+ years, of which the past 6 years have been spent in OSD as an Operations Manager.	
1.4	The draft minutes of the meeting held on 17 June 2009 were accepted as a true record of the meeting.	
1.5	Apologies were received from John Arnott (DECC), Susan Elston (COTA), Mark Robinson (Unite Amicus Section) and Ian Tasker	

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	(STUC).	
1.6	Steve confirmed that all actions from the previous meeting were complete.	
2	Operational Update & Health and Safety Statistics – Peter Mills	
2.1	Peter Mills presented an interim report on RIDDOR accident statistics prepared by Alan Thompson. Peter introduced himself to members as this was his first OIAC meeting and informed members that he was one of two Operations Managers in Aberdeen.	
2.2	Peter drew OIAC's attention to the recently published accident statistics for offshore unit on the UK Continental Shelf 1990 - 2007 (RR738) and previous reports RR566 and RR567 that are all freely available on HSE's web site.	
2.3	Peter asked OIAC members what they would want to see in any future operational issues session.	
3	Policy Update – Jim Neilson	
3.1	Jim explained the purpose of his presentation was to provide members with an update on offshore legislation following on from the presentation he gave at the OIAC meeting in June. During the last meeting, Jim explained to members the need for a Variation Order to fill legislative gaps in the offshore area. Jim confirmed that the Variation Order came into force on 5 August 2009 and it has a sun-setting clause until the new AOGBO is produced in April 2011	Secretariat to circulate presentation to members
3.2	<p>Jim went on to explain that amendments to the AOGBO and offshore legislation are threefold: to take account of operational lessons learnt; to ensure HSE's jurisdiction is maintained in the offshore area; and also a broader need to take account of emerging energies. The amendments will include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensuring HSE maintains jurisdiction if a Petroleum Licence is not in place; • Definition of offshore installation – clarity is required concerning vessels that fall within the definition of an offshore installation; • New article – this is to be free standing to cover storage of CO2, gas reclassification, gas stored in man-made strata and imported gas; and • Other regulations – HSE need to be clear about what regulations apply beyond territorial seas. This follows enquiries made about what legislation applies offshore and unless the application states that it does not, then it will apply. 	
3.3	Edmund Brookes asked whether the British Wind Energy Association were aware of the proposed amendments and Jim confirmed that they are.	
3.4	Jim clarified that HSE are reviewing all offshore legislation and need to understand the full implications of changing any piece of legislation to ensure it doesn't impact on any of other pieces of legislation. Jim outlined the proposed changes to offshore legislation, the details of	

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	which are in the presentation.	
3.5	Jim went on to explain to members about Directive 92/91 “Mineral Extracting through Drilling” and implementation of this Directive in the UK is satisfactory. Jim also updated members on the proposed amendments to the Pipelines Safety Regulations, including the proposal to introduce cost recovery for major hazard accident pipelines.	
3.6	Bob Kyle queried how cost recovery for offshore pipelines would work in practice. Jim confirmed that two rates are being considered in respect to pipelines onshore and offshore. The guidance will be updated to reflect this change.	
3.7	Jim went on to talk about the Adjournment Debate requested by MP Frank Doran held on 13 October and informed members that it was a good debate which raised specific issues including KP3, hydrocarbon releases, helicopter safety issues and permit to work systems (more to follow on this subject in item 4).	
3.8	John Taylor queried whether the Variation Order would cover decommissioning of installations. Jim confirmed this activity is already covered under HSE’s jurisdiction providing the duty holder remains the licensee for the installation. John went on to ask whether workers on decommissioning installations which are not covered by a licence were covered by the Offshore Safety Representatives and Safety Committee Regulations, or if the onshore Regulations extended to them by the Application Outside Great Britain Order. Jim clarified that DECC do not envisage any licence expiring before April 2011 when the new offshore legislation is introduced to cover this activity.	
3.9	Jim explained to members that HSE would consult on proposed amendments to the AOGBO and offshore legislation from April 2010. However, OIAC would have early sight of the consultation in February 2010 and HSE would seek views on the initial proposals and give OIAC an opportunity to discuss.	
3.10	Jim explained to members that HSE is a member of the North Sea Offshore Authorities Forum (NSOAF). He explained the purpose of the group is to share information about how each member works in the offshore area and to provide opportunities for better information exchange and consistency between European offshore regulators. Jim agreed to share details of the next NSOAF meeting with members.	Jim Neilson to share details of the next NSOAF meeting with members at the next OIAC
4	Common Permit to Work (CPTW)	
4.1	Jim Neilson prepared a paper on this topic which was circulated to members prior to the meeting. This paper contained a summary of OIAC’s previous discussions on the use of permit to work systems. Steve explained that this issue had been raised by Frank Doran at the Westminster adjournment debate on the 13 October 2009.	Secretariat to circulate link of report on debate to members
4.2	Steve reported that during the debate Frank Doran asked for HSE to carry out a comparative study of the current UK and Norwegian permit to work systems, with a view to introducing a common permit system in the UK. Steve informed members that Jonathan Shaw responded for the government and explained that HSE would ask the Offshore	

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	Industry Advisory Committee to consider what steps need to be taken to improve the use of permit to work systems (PTWS) in the North Sea.	
4.3	<p>Members agreed that the common permit to work debate had been going on since the Cullen report and there was still no evidence to suggest that a common permit to work would improve safety. Although Norway purports to operate such a system, there are still differences in the way they are operated from company to company.</p> <p>Jake Malloy agreed and added that a common PTWS does not necessarily introduce commonality. Jake provided an example of three UK installations, all operated by the one company, and how there was no consistent approach to PTWS. Jake believed that this was due to how individuals interpreted the PTWS. John Taylor highlighted the difference of opinion between operators and workers on this issue. John informed members that workers believe a PTWS will improve safety and explained how they had been the first to raise the issue.</p> <p>Jim Neilson reminded members that HSE have produced (with involvement from OIAC) guidance on PTWS, and in debate it was concluded that this did set a common permit to work system for the UK, even if the style of the permit to work form could vary.</p> <p>In turning to how to improve the use of permit to work systems, there were a variety of views from members on the approach OIAC should take. Some members believed research was the best option, possibly identifying accidents that have arisen due to the misapplication of a PTWS, which could then inform OIAC's view. John Taylor also proposed consultation of the workforce to establish their concerns.</p>	
4.4	Jake Molloy, John Taylor and Brian Negus confirmed that they would be consulting the workforce on this issue. Jim Neilson asked the trade unions if they would like the opportunity to work with human factor experts at HSE to design a common questionnaire for the workforce. Jake, John and Brian agreed to this.	
4.5	<p>Steve Walker concluded this item by summarising the actions agreed:</p> <p>(a) HSE would circulate the PTW guidance and ask HSE to consider if this guidance needs to be updated (e.g. to take account of developments in training and human factors);</p> <p>(b) HSE would look at its incident and investigation data to try and identify any incidents associated with PTW failures; and</p> <p>(c) HSE agreed to help the trade unions prepare a questionnaire that would be used to consult the workforce, including those attending WIG events, on how to improve the use of PTW systems offshore. The workforce views would be fed back to OIAC.</p>	<p>(a) Action on secretariat</p> <p>(b) Action on Robert Miles</p> <p>(c) Action on Jim Neilson & Robert Miles</p>
5	WIG Proposed plan of work – Julie Voce	
5.1	Julie had prepared a paper which had been circulated to members prior to the meeting. Julie Voce informed members that this would be her last OIAC meeting as she is taking up a post elsewhere in HSE and Fraser Easton would take over the role of Chair of WIG. Fraser is currently a member of WIG. Julie highlighted to members the important	

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	issues WIG had tackled and said the work they achieved was phenomenal considering all members had full time day jobs. Julie commended the progress they had each made in raising awareness of worker involvement.	
5.2	<p>Julie explained to members that WIG looks to OIAC for endorsement to take forward recommendations from the KP3 report in the 2009/10 work plan for WIG. This would include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Awareness of safety representatives and committees and the importance of their input to hazardous environments offshore. There will be an inspection project to inform a review of SI971 (this set of Regulations have been in place since just after Piper Alpha with no changes, except the duty to consult the workforce on a safety case). • Training – WIG have taken steps to address this issue by inviting representatives from training organisations to a Training Forum at the last WIG meeting. The majority of forum members had agreed that the current 5-day basic training for offshore elected safety representatives was all that was received by the majority of safety representatives, and that as such it was not sufficient to prepare elected safety representatives to carry out their role effectively. • Research – WIG had agreed that HSE research objectives for 2009/10 aligned with areas of work that WIG would like to see pursued in areas supporting workforce involvement but agreed to revisit the research agenda in the following year. • Events – WIG are planning three focus groups to take place in Spring 2010. These events will focus on Safety Representatives and Safety Committee roles, functions and powers of safety representatives. 	
5.3	Julie went on to discuss membership of WIG. Julie asked members to endorse Nicky Elphinstone, a safety representative, as a new WIG member and said that the group would look to recruit more safety representatives to WIG, possibly through the Spring 2010 focus groups. Julie informed members that John Skeggs from IADC had left WIG after a number of years and acknowledged his outstanding contribution. Julie confirmed that IADC will be reflecting on their contribution to WIG.	
5.4	Bob Kyle asked who the events would be aimed at and how they had been publicised. Julie said that the events had not yet been publicised, she clarified that the three events would not be aimed at all the workforce as with previous events, but will target safety representatives.	
5.5	John Monks asked if there will be further events and Julie confirmed that this would be decided by the new Chair of the group and will be dependant on budgets.	
5.6	Julie confirmed that the WIG KP3 Review had highlighted the need to improve two-way communications across the industry, and this issue was for everyone in the industry to address, not only WIG. These WIG events would be more like focus groups and would provide an opportunity to focus on issues, through the safety representatives.	
5.7	Steve Walker said that he was keen for sub-committees of OIAC to have work plans with clear objectives. Steve added that he would like	

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	the group to take simple recommendations and identify what that actually means and feed that to the people who are required to deliver the objectives. John Taylor confirmed that this was the intention of WIG.	
5.8	Bob Kyle raised the point about how powerful safety representatives and safety committees can be when used properly. He added that work needs to be done on safety roles and how they can be brought to the attention of management. Julie agreed and added that people do not appreciate the role and are not even aware of it, even though it is laid out in the Regulations. Julie went on to say that any findings from WIG focus groups should be highlighted by flyers and placed on the HSE website. Bob went on to say that there is a role for supervisors, OIMs and onshore management to understand the role of the safety representatives and safety committees. Julie confirmed that this had been recognised in the KP3 Review report and Bob highlighted that it was just as important as safety representative training. Julie informed OIAC that an initiative organised by the onshore Workforce Involvement Unit in HSE was funding joint training for both safety representatives and managers, and that this was being organised by Proskills with the first course delivered by UNITE. WIG had discussed this initiative at their last meeting.	
5.9	John Taylor asked for commitment about taking forward OIAC's questions about the role of safety representatives and safety committees which had arisen from the KP3 Review. Steve confirmed that OSD would be undertaking a project to formally assess the industry's compliance with SI971 in 2010/11, and that the results would be fed back to OIAC so members could identify work streams and areas for improvement. Following questioning, Steve emphasised that this project was to be part of a normal OSD intervention programme, and not a WIG initiative.	
5.10	Steve asked WIG to consider the other groups working in this field, e.g. the STEP Change workforce engagement working group, and to dovetail the work of WIG with these other groups/	
5.11	Julie asked OIAC to endorse: a) The work plan b) A further convening of the training forum (that had met before the last WIG meeting); and c) The new WIG membership to include Nicky Elphinstone and other safety representatives in the future. These three issues were endorsed.	
5.12	Fraser Easton recognised Julie's contribution to WIG. John Taylor also acknowledged Julie's commitment, ability and passion for the offshore workforce.	
6	An update on lifeboats – Steve Haddock	
6.1	Steve Haddock informed members that since the enactment of PFEER, HSE had concentrated on emergency response planning and rescue and recovery arrangements as they were the issues that particularly	

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	<p>stood out as needing attention following the Piper Alpha accident. Steve explained that the scrutiny of evacuation systems started several years ago following events in Norway when a fully loaded SOLAS approved freefall lifeboat was test launched and suffered severe structural damage, sufficient to cause fatalities had the boat been loaded with passengers rather than water bags. This obviously raised alarms in the industry and initiated extensive studies into the fitness for purpose of freefall boats both in Norway and the UK.</p>	
6.2	<p>Steve went on to explain to members that as a result of these studies modification and replacement of free-fall lifeboats has taken place in Norway. All duty holders in the UK sector with free-fall lifeboats of Norwegian manufacture have also addressed these issues. A number of UK duty holders use boats of Dutch manufacturer (Verhoef), and these duty holders had initiated their own research project to demonstrate that their lifeboats were fit for purpose. This was completed in Autumn 2008 and concluded that the Verhoef boats were indeed fit for purpose in terms of structural integrity. Although the major structural issues are resolved other issues remain, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seat design – freefall lifeboat seats are designed for a maximum load of 100kg and it has yet to established how they perform under higher loading. • Deceleration – there are indications that individuals in some seats in some designs of freefall lifeboat may experience unacceptable decelerations during launch. These seats have been quarantined until the issue is resolved. • Windage - High winds during a freefall launch can affect the angle entry which can impair the ability of the boat to get rapidly clear of the installation – this emerged from the Verhoef studies and is being addressed by the development of adverse weather policies. 	
6.3	<p>Steve explained that shortly after the freefall issue emerged, the CAA imposed loading restrictions on helicopters assuming an average male passenger weight of 98kg. This restriction brought into question the design limit on the loading of lifeboats which under SOLAS assumes an average passenger weight of 75 kg. Therefore, an information note was produced by HSE in 2008 which offered general guidance about how this issue should be managed. Steve confirmed that HSE are continuing to look at short and long-term solutions to this problem. Bob Kyle added that Oil and Gas UK are also looking at this issue.</p>	
6.4	<p>Steve went on to inform members that the Canadians had produced a lot of research recently on the potential for set back of lifeboats caused by weather conditions. This research concluded that for davit launched lifeboats launched into weather a set back of between zero and twice the wave height could be experienced, depending on which part of the wave the boat entered, with the obvious potential for an impact with the installation. In light of this, HSE had embarked on an information gathering exercise which involved sending questionnaires to all UK duty holders of installations asking for information on a range of parameters related to the environmental impairment of their evacuation systems.</p> <p>The results of this questionnaire were compiled into a database to</p>	

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	<p>provide the first UKCS wide overview of evacuation systems. The principal objective of the database is to use it as an analytical tool to identify those installations on which there may be a potential for adverse weather to impair their lifeboats and to focus inspection activities on these installations to resolve any problems that do exist.</p> <p>This has allowed HSE to identify the five installations with apparently the greatest potential for lifeboat impairment. All are normally unattended installations with a single lifeboat oriented into the prevailing weather. HSE is now working with these duty holders, who are being very cooperative, to establish the extent of the problem and to identify solutions if needed. The next steps are to identify which if any permanently manned installations have similar problems and resolve these.</p> <p>It is also intended to use the database to identify all those installations that do not have marine evacuation systems to confirm they have suitably high grade escape systems to back up helicopter evacuation.</p>	
6.5	<p>John Taylor asked if the engine power/design would make a difference and Steve confirmed that it would. Steve emphasised that these vessels are not specifically designed for offshore use, they are designed for the marine industry, and to produce specific features for offshore would be difficult. John went on to say that little or no information has been communicated to the workforce since the incident in Norway and suggested an article in Tea Shack news.</p>	<p>Steve Haddock to produce article for Tea Shack news relating to life boat set back</p>
7	Any other business	
7.1	<p>Steve discussed briefly OIAC meetings for 2010 and asked members if they would be happy for the March and November meetings to take place in Aberdeen, and the June meeting at HSL in Buxton. Members agreed to this.</p>	
7.2	<p>Steve brought the remaining agenda items to OIACs attention, highlighting that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An analysis of complaints had been undertaken and Steve provide members with the opportunity to make any comments at the next meeting if they wished to do so, but this could perhaps be covered in an operational update on a annual basis; • The KP3 Review presentation was unable to go ahead as Shahmeen Sheikh was unable to attend OIAC due to being unwell; and • The Future priorities for OIAC could be combined with a presentation on the new strategy and OSDs plan of work for 2010/11 at the March meeting. 	<p>Secretariat to liaise with members to arrange meeting dates for 2010</p>
7.2	<p>Steve thanked members for their contributions and closed the meeting.</p>	