

MARCH NEWSLETTER 2024



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WEEKLY & CASCADE NETS



- **Week 1 - Cascade RF Testing @ 8PM**
- **Week 2 - DMR Net @ 8PM on Essex RAYNET DV Scotland Talkgroup 23532 Slot 1 (Repeater)**
- **Week 3 - D-Star Net @ 8PM on Reflector 79 Module C**
- **Week 4 - Icom LTE Net @ 8PM on Essex RAYNET Talkgroup**
- **Week 5 - Cascade RF Chat Net @ 8pm**

2024 EVENTS DIARY



- Churches Together In Maldon - Fri 29th Mar
- AGM + EGM Hybrid - Thurs 2nd May
- Farleigh Hospice - Walk for Life - Sun 12th May
- Round Table - Baddow Races - Sun 19th May
- Spring Field Day - TBC during June
- Strong Women Trek - TBC May/June
- Chelmsford D-Day Event - Thurs 6th Jun **(NEW)**
- Brightlingsea Carnival - Sat 22nd June
- Clacton Carnival - Sat 10th Aug
- Clacton Airshow - Thurs 22nd & Fri 23rd Aug
- Colchester Midnight Walk - Sept TBC **(NEW)**
- Farleigh Hospice - Cycle for Life - Sun 8th Sept
- Chelmsford Marathon - Sun 13th Oct
- Winter Training Day - TBC Nov
- Santa Fun Run - Sun 1st Dec

MEMBERSHIP FEE

- We are now in a position to announce the new Membership Fee, effective from the 31st May 2024 for Existing Members
- For New Joiners, this will be from the 1st April 2024
- The new Fee is £33 if paid via BACS or £34 if paid via Credit/Debit Card (£1 covers transaction fees by card provider)
- The fee is broken down as follows, £24 is paid to RAYNET-UK and just £9 is kept by Essex RAYNET to go towards ongoing costs and investment in new Technologies to support our operations
- Our Fee was raised inline with the increase by RAYNET-UK in early January of 66% and continues to offer good value for money
- Honorary Members, for which we have seven currently, will be under no obligation to pay and any monies received will be treated as a donation towards the Group.
- The renewal window is between now and the 31st March, with all payments due by 15th April.

AGM + EGM



- We can now confirm the EGM & AGM will be held on Thursday 2nd May.
- You will be able to join via Microsoft Teams or by attending in person, at Danbury Village Hall.
- Timings have been indicated in the Calling Notice which has been sent out via Email from G7DBM.
- As usual, this is your opportunity to help shape the Committee of 2024-2025, as well as vote on any changes to the Constitution and see what we've been up to over the last 12 months
- They'll be the usual opportunity for a natter & refreshments.

ADMIN

- The Annual RAYNET Survey has been distributed via Email earlier this week - this is your opportunity to directly feedback to the Management Committee
- If you need any clothing, please email supplies@essexraynet.co.uk or WhatsApp G8UDD Steve
- We can now offer Card Payments such as Debit or Credit Cards for Membership, Clothing and Donations.

ENGINEERING



- The Engineering Team recently took the opportunity to upgrade the temporary Crossband Repeater at our Chelmsford Site, with a Motorola GM Crossband, which has seen an improvement in coverage and audio level. This has allowed our Icom Crossband to be returned to mobile operations.
- In preparation for the Colchester Half Marathon this week, the Engineering Team carried out course testing on DMR, which allowed us to identify some not spots in coverage which had changed from last year - proof that repeat testing is essential! We have worked around them, through the deployment of Mobile DMR Radios.

REPEATER CALLSIGNS



- In line with the recent changes from Ofcom relating to Licensing, Essex RAYNET has been issued with 6 Temporary Repeater Callsigns which will be used on our 5w-25w ERP Systems on Events - please look out for these in Event Briefings as they will now be included in our Hourly Broadcast Messages. The format is for example MB9 then 3 letters such as MB9ABC
- This applies to the use of Crossband and In-Band Repeater Equipment.
- Operators who are using Vehicle Crossbands to extend coverage to Handhelds, using Low Power, are classified as 'Personal' and therefore will not require a Essex RAYNET Temporary Callsign - you will instead use your own Callsign.
- We are in the process of Licensing our Repeater Sites which may exceed 25w ERP, with assistance from RAYNET-UK.

MB7UCH APRS



- We recently installed and licensed, MB7UCH, an APRS Digipeater, at our Chelmsford Site, following a period of testing during the last 6 months.
- This will fill a much needed gap in APRS Coverage, in the Chelmsford area.
- Coverage is looking encouraging, beacons detected near Stansted Airport, Dartford and Colchester
- We are also exploring the possibility of additional sites in Maldon and Wickford
- APRS is a useful technology which can function without the need for an Internet Connection, if Digipeaters are within range of one another
- The system is built using a PLXDigi from MicroSat, Icom IC-F5022 VHF Radio and uses a Diamond X50 Antenna
- Equipment was donated and licensed by 2E0XTA to Essex RAYNET

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COLCHESTER HALF MARATHON



- We recently assisted Nice Works on behalf of the Robin Cancer Trust, with the Colchester Half Marathon, on a wet Sunday 17th March, providing a resilient Safety Radio Communications Network
- Working alongside St John Ambulance and Essex 4x4 Response, Traffic Management and Marshalls, to keep the 2500 Runners safe
- We deployed a team of 16 Operators, utilising DMR technology and a Inband Repeater, to give route-wide coverage
- We also used APRS Technology to track our Members and the Sweep using a Byonics All In One APRS Tracker - Coverage provided by MB7UCE APRS Digipeater run by the Martello Tower Group, who we thank for use of the System
- We would like to pass our congratulations onto everybody who took part as a participant and the Operators who volunteered their time to make this event possible

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