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CHILD PROTECTION

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Introduction

A review of the implications of the Child Protection Act on the operation of IWMM was prompted by the December 2005 Morris Ring Circular on this topic and is guided by the advice which it contained. Officers of the Side discussed the issues on 12 December 2005 and the subsequent draft was subjected to further comment and amendment. The documentation was agreed on 22 December 2005 and was published on 1 January 2006.

Assessment

Discussion identified a number of scenarios which encompass the range of activities which IWMM carries out and the child protection requirements for each of them were then considered. In making this assessment IWMM followed the Ring guidance that a child is less than sixteen years old and that special provisions apply to children less than eight years old. A general consideration taken into account was that essentially all IWMM activities are of a group nature, ie it would be rare for someone of any age to be with only one or two others.

S1: Children are spectators at an event organised by another party at which IWMM is providing entertainment, eg village fete, party, show.

It is considered that responsibility for meeting the Act rests with the organiser and that the only requirement on IWMM is to ensure that performance and general behaviour are appropriate for the age etc of the audience.

S2: Children are participants in an event organised by another party at which IWMM is providing demonstration and instruction, eg Cubs, Scouts.

It is considered that responsibility for meeting the Act rests with the organiser and that the only requirement on IWMM is to ensure that the demonstration, teaching methods and general behaviour are appropriate for the age etc of the participants.

S3: Children are spectators at an event organised by IWMM, eg morris tours, ceilidhs.

It is recalled that IWMM has rarely, if ever, organised an event specifically for children and it is accepted that if it ever did so in the future then the guidance provided in the Ring Circular (annex A) would need to be followed.

It is considered that any restricted entry event eg a ceilidh, which IWMM organised for a general audience would, by its very nature, have children present only when accompanied by a responsible adult. Morris tours take place in public view and people watch or not as they pass by. So there may be unaccompanied children in the audience but they are there by chance and it is considered that they are not the responsibility of IWMM. In both the cases considered in this paragraph it is concluded that the only responsibility on IWMM is to ensure that performance and general behaviour are appropriate for the age etc of the audience.

S4: Children participant in an event organised by IWMM, eg instructionals, tours.

In general, invitations to such events are to Sides rather than individuals and so any visiting children will be part of an organised group. It is considered that responsibility for such children should rest with the Side of which they are a part and that it would be wise to make this clear when issuing invitations. However, it

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would be for IWMM to ensure that planned activities and venues were appropriate for the anticipated ages present.

S5: Children are apprentices or members of IWMM, eg participate in practices, performances, tours.

It is considered that the group nature of the IWMM activities provides little opportunity for untoward behaviour but that to ensure compliance with the Act some procedures would need to be put in place. Consequently it is decided that, except in special circumstances to be agreed on a case by case basis, no apprentice or member of IWMM will be less than eleven years old. All apprentices or members aged between eleven and sixteen must be accompanied by a responsible adult who has the permission of the parent or guardian (see annex B).

Policy

P1: At all times and at all events IWMM will perform, demonstrate, instruct and generally behave in a manner which is appropriate (see guidance in Annex A) to the audience and participants, in particular with regard to the age of those involved.

P2: IWMM responsibility when performing, demonstrating or instructing at events organised by other parties is limited to the appropriate behaviour given in P1 and events will be undertaken on this basis.

P3: Entry restricted events organised by IWMM will be structured so that children are the responsibility of accompanying adults and activities will be tailored to the age of the audience/participants.

P4: Displays in public places, eg on tours, are of a nature in which IWMM does not have responsibility for the audience save for the generally policy set out in P1.

P5: Apprentices and members of IWMM will be over eleven and those between eleven and sixteen will be accompanied by a responsible adult who has the written permission of the parent or guardian (see annex B).

Implementation

A1: This document and its annexes will be issued to all active apprentices and members. It will be provided to new apprentices/members on joining.

A2: Parents and guardians of all apprentices and members between the ages of eleven and sixteen will be requested to provide written agreement (see annex B) that their child may be part of IWMM and nominate a responsible adult(s).

A3: Appropriate information and disclaimers are provided when issuing invitations to events or when accepting bookings (see annex C).

Review

The operation of the IWMM child protection policy will be an agenda item at each annual general meeting.

Annexes Annex A: Morris Ring – Child Protection Policy Guidelines
 Annex B: Parent/guardian agreements
 Annex C: Disclaimers.