

Humberside Coastguard Search and Rescue Helicopters

Hello Kirmington parish residents!

My name is Jonathan Stanley and I have the good fortune to be the Deputy Chief Pilot at the Coastguard Search and Rescue helicopter base just up Caistor Road from Kirmington village. I have lived in East Yorkshire for many years and previously flew both the RAF Sea King rescue helicopters at Leconfield, near Beverley, and the police helicopter here at Humberside airport.



As we have been based at Humberside airport for 5 years now, I'm hoping that as Kirmington parish residents you might appreciate a little bit of an insight into what my colleagues and I do for a living and what your 'local' rescue helicopters are actually being used for. I'll be providing regular monthly updates, of which this is the first, hosted by the parish council website and giving you some idea of our day-to-day operations along with a summary of the previous month's callouts.

I'm also planning, with the assistance of the Kirmington parish council, to give an illustrated presentation on our operations at a local venue in the near future to which parish residents will be invited. Details of this will be published once arrangements have been finalised. I'd be very pleased to see you there and, after the presentation, I'll be happy to address any questions or concerns that you might have. Watch this space!

The Humberside Search and Rescue (commonly abbreviated to 'SAR') helicopter base is one of ten locations around the United Kingdom operated on contract to the Maritime and Coastguard Agency by Bristow Helicopters Ltd.

We have two Sikorsky S-92 aircraft at Humberside, registrations G-MCGE and G-MCGH, and have a full crew on duty at the base ready to respond to any search and rescue tasking 24 hours per day, every day of the year. I'll elaborate on this, and some of our equipment, in future monthly updates.

We finished 2019 with a total of 189 operational callouts, which was significantly fewer than the average of around 250 per year for 2016, 2017 and 2018. There doesn't seem to be any particular reason for this reduction and, of course, it isn't a bad thing, as it means that fewer people needed our assistance! We'll see what 2020 brings.

Similarly, although January is traditionally a quiet period for search and rescue tasks in our region, last month saw a significant reduction in the number of 'jobs' compared with previous years (17 callouts in January 2019, for example):

| Date | Times | Tasking |
|-------------|---------------|---|
| 1 January | 13:03 – 14:39 | 50 year-old male faller with serious arm injuries at Little Thornwick Bay, Flamborough Head. Winched to the top of the cliff and left in the care of ambulance paramedics. Assisted by Bridlington Coastguard Rescue Team. |
| 3 January | 17:58 – 19:56 | 38 year-old male fitting due to reported alcohol withdrawal (!) on offshore gas platform. Winched to the aircraft, as the helideck was too small for the S-92 to use, and taken to Hull Royal Infirmary. |
| 4 January | 04:31 – 07:24 | Crewman with suspected appendicitis winched from windfarm support vessel 20 nautical miles north east of Spurn and taken to Hull Royal Infirmary. |
| 13 January | 21:46 – 22:46 | Search of Humber foreshore at Hull for missing 87 year-old male. Nothing found, so stood down. |
| 14 January | 15:58 – 18:51 | 51 year-old male suffering from suspected stroke on offshore gas platform 112 north east of Kirmington. Landed on helideck in storm force winds, casualty loaded and taken to Hull Royal Infirmary. |
| 15 January | 00:26 – 01:22 | Search for missing vulnerable 37 year-old male at Mundesley on north east Norfolk coast. Unsuccessful search carried out in poor weather until retasked to another incident. |
| 15 January | 01:22 – 02:06 | Retasked from previous mission to search for missing vulnerable autistic 22 year-old male, 3 miles south of Spalding. Unable to reach the scene due to poor weather so aborted and returned to base. |
| 15 January | 13:06 – 15:50 | 67 year-old male with debilitating back problem aboard offshore gas platform 120 nautical miles east of Kirmington. Landed on helideck, casualty loaded and taken to Norwich airport for onward transfer by road ambulance. |
| 18 January | 15:30 – 16:12 | Tasked to Lake District to fallen walker with serious arm injury in Langdale. Closer rescue helicopters already engaged on other rescue tasks and air ambulance unable to land at the scene. Stood down at Harrogate as one of the closer helicopters had become available. |

Watch out for details about the public presentation, and next month I'll be able to let you know about our SAR tasks during February. In the meantime, if we wake you up in the middle of the night then I apologise...but it's because somebody urgently needs our help!

Jon