



OXFORD UNIVERSITY COLLEGE DEPLOYS A MOTOTRBO™ IP SITE CONNECT SYSTEM

FOR CRYSTAL-CLEAR, RELIABLE, MULTISITE COMMUNICATIONS



KEBLE COLLEGE

With over 800 bright, curious students, Keble is one of the biggest colleges at the University of Oxford. Founded in 1870, it prides itself on its reputation for challenging the status quo and its core focus of encouraging learning, passion and ambition to thrive within its college community. Its maintenance, grounds and porter teams, who are pivotal in ensuring smooth day-to-day operations at the college, have recently started using a MOTOTRBO IP Site Connect multisite system for radio communications.

CHALLENGE

Seventeen years ago, experienced communications company and Motorola Solutions platinum partner Radiocom Systems Ltd deployed a fleet of Motorola Solutions licence-free PMR446 radios at Keble College, for communications across its main campus. The radios had operated well all that time. However, with the opening of the new H B Allen Centre, the required coverage area has expanded, so the range no longer extended to some key areas, such as the new grounds and maintenance workshop at the Centre. The initial short-term trial managed by Radiocom to run new MOTOTRBO licensed radios on back-to-back frequencies still did not afford total coverage or address the additional need to introduce safety features, such as Lone Worker, or linked communications with its sports ground, over a mile (1.6km) away. So, Keble decided to look at a long-term upgrade, to go hand-in-hand with the expansion of its campus.

CUSTOMER PROFILE

Organisation:
Keble College

Partner:
Radiocom Systems Ltd

Industry:
Education

Location:
Oxford, UK

Motorola Solutions Products:

- 3-site MOTOTRBO IP Site Connect system comprising:
- 3 MOTOTRBO SLR 5500 repeaters
- MOTOTRBO DP4601e and DP4401e digital portable two-way radios
- IMPRES™ batteries and chargers
- 5-year service and support package

“The MOTOTRBO system is very easy to use and offers reliable coverage across and between our three sites, with added functionality such as Lone Worker. The installation was handled quickly and effectively by the Radiocomms team, despite lockdown; they were reliable, knowledgeable and helpful – exactly what you would hope for from a partner – and they will continue to support us on an ongoing basis. The system is a long-term investment for us and is our foremost way of communicating now. We’re constantly using the radios; the one-to-all communications are really helping us to effectively coordinate operations and work efficiently.”

Jodi Thomas, Head of Maintenance, Keble College



SOLUTION

Radiocomms deployed a three-site MOTOTRBO IP Site Connect system and provided training to the relevant staff. The hardware was installed during the first COVID-19 national lockdown. The Radiocomms team installed three SLR 5500 repeaters – one at the main campus, one at the H B Allen Centre and one at the outlying sports ground – and the repeaters are linked by the college’s IP network for seamless wide area coverage and automatic roaming, with no need for manual intervention or channel changes. The IP connectivity was already in place at the main campus and the H B Allen Centre but the Radiocomms engineers had to overcome the technical challenge of integrating the older technology at the sports ground into the expanded network.

Grounds staff, maintenance teams and porters, positioned at the entrance lodges, all use DP4601e and DP4401e radios with long-life IMPRES batteries to communicate over the MOTOTRBO network, with the DP4601e display devices being used by those needing to access the phone book and make individual calls. All users have allocated radios and access to all channels, with the option to operate the emergency button to summon help with one touch using Transmit Interrupt to clear a channel when necessary. Keble relies on the system for voice communications and there are five talk groups, with two duplicated for lone worker channels.

Jodi Thomas explains why Keble chose to deploy a MOTOTRBO network rather than rely on mobile phones: “We work in rough environments, often outdoors, and mobile phones just aren’t cut out for that type of usage. We need hard-wearing, IP-rated, robust, reliable and rugged devices. Motorola radios tick all the boxes. Battery life is really important for us too. Moreover, you don’t get a mobile signal in many of our basement areas and it can be intermittent at the sports fields, whereas, with the MOTOTRBO system, we know we’ll always be in range.” And the system has worked optimally since deployment, but the repeaters and radios are protected by a 5-year Service and Support package and Radiocomms provide ongoing support and service, should any issues arise.

Another key element for Keble is the one-to-all calling, which is ideal for sharing real-time information from different locations when coordinating incidents, such as a burst pipe, and for day-to-day operations, like grounds inspections, organising on-site contractors and fire alarm practices. Lone Worker is also enabled on the radios used by the maintenance and grounds teams for staff working alone, often handling machinery like tractor-style mowers at the sports ground. These lone workers need to respond to a tone set on the radio at regular intervals, by pressing the PTT button; if he or she fails to respond within the predefined time, the radio sends a pre-alert to the supervisor radios, so college protocol can be followed.

BENEFITS

Radiocomms was able to deliver a successful, albeit socially distanced, deployment in the challenging circumstances of the COVID-19 lockdowns. As Terry Staff, account manager at Radiocomms, summarises: “We pride ourselves on our ability to deliver for our customers, whatever the situation. It’s fantastic to see the improved coverage and functionality that this MOTOTRBO system is delivering for Keble and how it is supporting new workplace strategies, worker safety and operational efficiency. And, as always, MOTOTRBO is easily scalable, as and when the college needs to grow the numbers of users.” And users have praised the ease of use of the system, the improved, crystal-clear audio across the three sites and the freedom that the wide area coverage and roaming affords them. This MOTOTRBO IP Site Connect system will be used daily by Keble’s maintenance, grounds and porter teams for many years to come.

Benefits:

- Efficient, fast installation fully managed by experienced Radiocomms team during COVID-19 lockdown
- Seamless, reliable coverage throughout and between sites
- Easy-to use system with all-call communications, so the maintenance, grounds and porter teams can communicate reliably in real time, work more productively, and coordinate complex jobs effectively
- Robust radios, suited to outdoor grounds staff and maintenance work
- Enhanced features such as Lone Worker improve staff safety

