

Timber Transport Forum Meeting
FC, Silvan House,
10.30 2nd Oct 2015
Agreed Minute

Expecting: Colin Mackenzie, Kirsty Robb, Margaret Horn, Roland Stiven, Derek Nelson, James England, Chris Campbell, Ken Sinclair, Neil Dyson, Crispin Thorn, Alistair Speedie, David Sulman
Martin Bishop (on phone), Simon Oldham

Apologies: Jamie Farquhar, Fergus Tickell, Robin Pope, Allan McNicol, Victoria Hutchinson, Neil Stoddart, Hazel Thompson, Andrew Douglas

1. Welcome and apologies

Welcome to Martin Bishop, Confor's National Director for Wales (on the phone).

2. Previous minute

The minute of the meeting on 24th April 2015 was agreed. The Forum also noted the report on the Forum visit to Ireland in June 2015.

Matters arising

- Website. The new Timber Transport Forum website has been online since June 2015. Any comments or suggestions to Roland Stiven. Project officers have editing permissions for their respective group pages.

ACTION RS to confirm website sign in details for Kirsty and Claire

- Business Plan. This has been refreshed for 2015-16 and is now available as a pdf from the [website](#). Planning for 2016-17 should begin. While we are unsure of resources for next year and may not have confirmation of budgets before January/February 2016 we should plan assuming continued funding for project officers.

ACTION: RS to arrange Forum Executive Group Meeting to review business plan and Forum partnership funding.

- Exit Point study has been completed with production of the interactive GIS mapping tool showing exit points, production forecasts and expected flows on local roads. Project officers are sharing this with groups and councils with good feedback so far. The new data is prompting Agreed Routes Map reviews in most Scottish groups. Roland Stiven is to report to the Scottish Roads Research Board on the project shortly.

3. Truckfest Scotland

The Timber Transport Forum and FISA joined with industry players to put on a display of timber trucks at Truckfest on 1st and 2nd August 2015. Neil Stoddart and Roland Stiven attended. FISA tentatively launched their driver guide for timber hauliers.

4. Project Officer's (Scotland) Meeting

The project officers in Scotland met on 23rd June 2015 to receive training on editing the new website. The exit point tool was reviewed and discussed. James England had also raised the issue of Timber Transport Management Plans proposing that these need to be seen to relate to the road and to be equally relevant to new parties after sale of any forests.

The Forum agreed that TTMP agreements should be made clear in any sale particulars, noting that while they are not statutory they are the outcome of negotiations between forest owners and local roads authorities. They should also be shown on the ARM website.

There was subsequent discussion on the terms of engagement of project officers in relation to timber transport complaints from communities noting that they (project officers) cannot speak on behalf of either the industry or the roads authorities, each of which have a role to play in communicating with communities. Project officers do not have contractual control of hauliers or statutory powers or duties. Community engagement will be the subject of the forthcoming conference.

ACTION: RS to ensure Forum contributes to the current FCS review of consultation procedures being led by Syd House.

5. Forum Visit to Ireland

James England, Ken Sinclair, Colin Mackenzie, Frank MacCulloch, John Paterson, Neal McGovern and Gillian Clark went on the trip to Ireland. Roland Stiven and Alistair Speedie could not attend as planned. The group was welcomed and shared presentations with around 40 people. There was a good level of information sharing and interest. On the following day the group visited a sawmill and a trailer manufacturer. A report of the visit can be found on the [Forum website](#) together with the presentations. Forum members would like to **record their thanks to John Lyons** for his efforts in arranging such a successful visit. The group proposed a reciprocal visit from the Irish.

ACTION RS to discuss with John Lyons potential for a reciprocal visit by the Irish FITG.

6. Guidance on stacking and loading timber on or adjacent to public roads

The draft document was discussed. The Forum agreed it should be progressed and issued as formal supplementary guidance to Managing Timber Transport. It was suggested that the document should consider reference to CDM regulations and footway parking regulations. Need to adjust the wording of the final paragraph, include some positive good practice images and find a better name. Then launch with some industry publicity.

ACTION RS to revise draft as above and recirculate for final comment prior to producing as online pdf and launching.

7. Funding

- STTF STTS

Derek Nelson noted that the future funding position remains uncertain though the pressures on all FCS budgets are downwards. Should a future STTF be available the budget is likely to be for 1 year rather than longer as there is an election after the budget.

The current year budget is underspent due to reduced demand for Timberlink (exchange rate related industry downturn) and one project not being delivered. FCS is expecting around £280k of underspend. FCS may be able to approve some specific spend extending existing projects or for new quality projects deliverable by February 2016. It is unlikely that funding could be allocated to winter damage unless there was a very extreme winter weather event as in 2010/11.

James England and Kirsty Robb asked if a suite of locally strategic projects could be put forward as being strategic, such as several pinch points on a route or multiple access points within an area. Previously this has been done in Morayshire

ACTION: JE, KR and RS to develop a paper on the potential for suites of works projects to deliver strategic benefits through STTF.

- Freight Grants

Margaret Horn said that the Scottish Government's mode shift grants are still open for business. Any future budget will depend on the spending review.

- England

Crispin Thorn said that the £1m identified by the previous coalition government for local enterprise partnership-related forestry spend was being reviewed in the context of scenario planning for DEFRA cuts of 25-40%. Announcement of government spending review expected 25th November and departmental budgets in January 2016. There is still scope for ideas and lobbying.

8. Engaging with governments

A Forum sub group met in August to discuss how to engage with the various governments. A minute of the meeting has been circulated. Some actions were identified and have been taken forward.

- England

Athole McKillop (in his capacity as NE England TTG chair) recently wrote to Anne Marie Trevelyan MP (vice chair of Westminster All Party Parliamentary Group on Forestry) and Guy Opperman (MP for Hexham area) regarding the need for a timber transport fund for England.

Alistair Speedie said that the case for investment in timber transport infrastructure on both sides of the border is being made as part of the Borderlands Deal. This involves Rory Stewart MP (UK Minister for forestry). A Borderlands document is to be agreed on the 6th November followed by a further briefing. Alistair Speedie will continue to press this agenda. Roots to Prosperity will be updating the industry at a meeting in Cumbria on 9th October.

Confor's Forestry Westminster Conference is on 10th November and the Timber Transport Forum will be represented.

- Wales

Chris Edwards has retired from Welsh Government and Terry O'Keefe has taken over his role with regard to the Forum funding. Welsh Government funding to the Forum post runs out in March 2016 and it is not expected to be extended. Roland and Martin Bishop presented to the Natural Resources Wales/Industry Liaison Group to raise the issue. Confor submitted a bid to Welsh Government in June for funding to support delivering some timber transport forum-type services as part of a wider industry dissemination service. This was rejected. There may be scope to attract project funding e.g. for mapping timber traffic exit/access points. Confor is also looking for funding to better assess the economic contribution of the industry in Wales which could highlighted the role of timber transport.

Martin manned the Confor tent at the Royal Welsh Show which featured Timber Transport Forum banners and material. The tent hosted a series of industry seminars on forestry day. Roland Stiven attended. The four day show attracts 240k people including many government staff and Assembly Members.

- Scotland

The sub group meeting agreed to respond to the Land Reform Review consultation (by the end of that week) with a brief note asking that 'Ministers instruct the new Scottish Land Commission to give this subject [timber transport] its early attention'. This was done and the submission was circulated. We are yet to receive a response.

Alistair Speedie and Roland Stiven presented to the SCOTS Executive Group in August and received backing for the work of the Forum and the need for a continuation of the STTF. Roland also presented on timber transport issues to the wider SCOTS business meeting.

Roland presented on behalf of Alistair to the COSLA Development, Economy and Sustainability Executive Group with support from Bill Barker. The group continued their support for the Forum and the STTF.

Roland attended the Land Use Strategy update in June and a National Planning Framework conference. Roland and Jamie Farquhar subsequently met with Scottish Government staff to discuss mechanisms for ensuring that the infrastructure needs of the Land Use Strategy are dealt with by the strategic planning system. The advice was for the Forum to keep doing what it does but do more in getting the industry and its requirements featured in regional development planning forums. Alistair Speedie suggested that the Forum could also ask to present to the Heads of Planning Scotland.

ACTION Alistair Speedie to request a Forum submission to Heads of Planning Scotland

Scottish Parliament Freight Inquiry

The Forum contributed in late 2014 to the Scottish Parliament Freight Inquiry and timber transport was well covered in the [committee's report](#) highlighting the opportunity to maximise the potential form moving timber by sea and to explore innovation to move timber by rail. Also to expand access to freight grant schemes. Timber Transport was not mentioned in the subsequent [debate](#).

Margaret Horn noted the Scottish Government's [response](#) to the Freight Inquiry. There will be a refresh of the National Transport Strategy which will include a new Freight Policy. Scottish Government is looking to update the Freight Action Plan visions and objectives and invites comments quickly. There will be a Stakeholder Workshop to discuss the National Transport Strategy refresh in November to which the Forum has been invited. There is to be a separate rail freight strategy review process. Alistair Speedie said that it was important that the Forum contributes to the NTS refresh and highlights timber transport issues at regional and council level strategies.

Meeting with Minister

Alistair Speedie, Roland Stiven, Stuart Goodall (for industry), - neither Jamie Farquhar nor David Sulman can attend - and Kirsty Robb will represent the Forum at a meeting with Dr Aileen Macleod, MSP Minister for the Environment, Climate Change and Land Reform on 8th October. The agenda for the meeting was circulated to the Forum and agreed.

9. Regional Updates

North Yorkshire

Crispin Thorn said that the group last met in May. Council representatives had noted severe pressure on council engagement in non-statutory functions but there was a commitment to continued engagement with the group.

North East England

Roland Stiven recently presented to NE Freight Quality Partnership describing the role and work of the Forum.

Cumbria

Recent meetings have been postponed due to limited agenda.

Highland

Colin Mackenzie noted the general slow down in harvesting and haulage in the area, due to the current downturn. The Forum industry input to the Flow Country issues had been progressed well thorough a series of teleconferences over the summer. There was agreement that the viability of a rail option needs to properly investigated and, to that end, the existing STTS Branchliner study has been revised to deliver a comprehensive review of what is possible. Several consultants are contributing to the study. The private forestry and timber interests in the area are considering the idea of a co-operative venture to provide volume for a rail service and have met with Cooperative Development Scotland. The Council continues to consider the need for formal restrictions and the use of a permit system to control timber haulage within the capacity of the road network.

The Roadex group has taken up the Tread Softly concept of a truck wear factor to assess the physical impact of different lorry configurations on roads. Their analysis confirms the Tread Softly approach and suggests that supersingles have several times more impact than twin tyres on weak roads.

ACTION Colin Mackenzie to summarise Roadex review of low impact lorry configuration

Argyll

The next Argyll TTG meeting is in November.

Stirling & Tayside & Grampian

Claire Glaister said the July meetings included presentations on the dualling programmes for the A9 and A96 (Grampian) and the need for liaison to take account of timber industry requirements. The exit point information is proving useful in this regard.

Claire has met with three councils so far to introduce the exit point tool. In Aberdeenshire there have been discussions to highlight agreed routes and timber transport issues within the review of the indicative forestry strategy.

Grampian TTG is considering whether relevant road closure notifications can be distributed by project officer.

Rannoch railhead project is still progressing but there is frustration with the slow engagement from Network Rail. Ken Sinclair noted that FES has established team working with network rail to manage tree felling close to rail lines, to improve network resilience. A trial is ongoing outside Dingwall.

Claire is drafting a leaflet 'Guide to Managing Timber Transport' for Stirling and Tayside and Grampian groups which may have a wider role.

ACTION Claire Glaister to share S&T&G Guide to Managing Timber Transport with Forum

Scottish Borders

James England reported that there have been several reports of hauliers ignoring Agreed Routes Maps to the extent that James has issued a reminder noting that the councils have powers to recover costs of damage and that this could be progressed where there is no liaison on consultation routes or abuse of the voluntary approach.

Scottish Borders roads authority staff are meeting next week to consider infrastructure considerations connected with a proposed new planting application. A sawlog fell off a lorry in Newcastleton.

A case study is being prepared on deep road recycling to improve very weak roads.

D&G

The exit point data has highlighted the need to review and refresh the Agreed Routes Map. This is being taken forward. D&G TTG is keen to have the guidance on roadside stacking and loading completed to disseminate, as this remains a topical issue. The Eskdalemuir bypass management group is considering how to control excessive lorry speed on the bypass which is contributing to higher maintenance costs.

Ayrshire

There has been a lot of work relating to felling along the route of the new powerline interconnector. Also different expectations from councils regarding the design of forest entrances from the public road. This could benefit from some examples of what is appropriate where.

The date and venue of the Timber Transport Conference has been set for the 10th March 2016 at Battleby Conference Centre near Perth. Dr Aileen Macleod has said she will attend and present. Amanda Bryan (Forestry Commissioner) has said she would give a talk on the theme of social engagement. A first draft programme was circulated for discussion.

ACTION: Roland Stiven, James England, David Sulman to develop Conference Programme

11. FISA Timber Haulage Driver's Guide

A first small print run of this was circulated at Truckfest in August. It is yet to be formally approved by the FISA board.

12. Training

Claire Glaister reported that she sits on a new Industry Leadership Group sub-group on skills for the forestry and timber sector, encompassing timber haulage. The group includes representatives of Forest Research, University of the Highland and Islands and Skills Development Scotland. Claire mentioned the continuing lack of timber haulage specific training despite the availability of material produced through the STTS funded Driver Training project. McPhersons of Aberlour have delivered some timber specific haulage training and there is currently discussions within the FISA haulage working group about addressing training needs. Roland and Claire will feed into this discussion and keep the Forum informed of developments or opportunities.

13. AOB

Ian Farmer will retire from Scottish Government Freight Group at the end of October. Ian has been involved in the work of the Forum since its early days and in the development of Timberlink and the Strategic Timber Transport Fund. Ian has also been a valued member of the STTS Panel.

ACTION RS to thank Ian Farmer for his contribution to the Forum.

14. Dates of 2016 meetings

- 15th January, 15th April, 24th June, 7th October