

Timber Transport Forum Meeting
Egger
Hexham
10.30 17th June 2016
Agreed Minute

Present: Derek Nelson, Jason Hubert, Roland Stiven, Gillian Clark, Hazel Newman, David Sulman, Athole McKillop, Rob Lewis, Jamie Farquhar, James England, Colin Mackenzie, Simon Oldham, Robin Pope, Neil Dyson, Crispin Thorn, Keith McDowell

Apologies: Chris Little, Alasdair Ferguson, Claire Glaister, Victoria Hutchinson, Kirsty Robb, Ken Sinclair, James MacDonald, Neil Stoddart, Margaret Watson, Alistair Speedie,

1. Welcome

In Alistair Speedie's absence, David Sulman chaired the meeting and thanked Egger for hosting the Forum meeting. Particular welcome to new attendees Jason Hubert, Head of Business Development FCS and Rob Lewis of Cumbria County Council. Margaret Horn has moved posts in Scottish Government so will no longer be attending Forum meetings. Keith McDowell conveyed from Margaret "...please mention to the group ... that I found it a constructive forum and thoroughly enjoyed attending the meetings over the years. I wish them all the best going forward." The Forum in turn expressed their thanks for Margaret's contribution over several years.

2. Previous minutes

The minute of the meeting of 26th April 2016 was agreed. There were no matters arising.

3. Introduction to North East England Timber Transport Group

Athole McKillop summarised the development of the group since 2012 noting the gradual engagement of the councils (Northumberland and Durham), the launch of an Agreed Routes Map in September 2014 and the continuing issue of council engagement in the group. There remains high level council commitment to the group from director level and from key councillors but there have been frequent changes in council representatives on the group requiring an ongoing process of developing understanding of the sector and re-building working relationships and trust. Athole noted that the overall production from Northumberland forests is static or in decline and the actual scale of haulage – at an average of 70 lorries per day (about 60 from public forests) – is not unmanageable and may be comparable to other rural traffic.

Crispin Thorn noted that the North Yorkshire group had a similar trajectory but is now stable and effective. The Agreed Routes Map is key a key document and acts as a framework for discussing individual extraction route / roading issues.

An exit point study may help take things forward and the 10-15 yr forecasts would mesh with highways authority asset management plans. There may be scope to attract funding through Roots to Prosperity and the funding opportunity previously announced by the Government (£1m)..

Rob Lewis noted that the Cumbria group has not met for some time and that generally timber traffic issues were being dealt with by council staff. There was agreement to reactivate the group following discussion with Richard Scott and James McDonald of BSW

in this regard. There was discussion about the merits of merging the Cumbria and NE England groups and sharing an exit point survey.

4. Forum Business Plan

Roland Stiven presented a paper setting out the proposed workplan for the remainder of the year and highlighting ongoing and new priorities. This was largely agreed. The following points were made:

- The idea of a high level study into the level of longer term investment required in the public road network to serve forestry should be developed further. A proposal for the study should concentrate on using existing resources and knowledge and incorporating Road Condition Indicator data. It could cover Scotland and North England.
- The Forum should encourage industry collaboration in the use of vehicle tracking technology. This may have additional benefits in relation to managing plant health regimes and timber security.
- Police Scotland have SPARC - Scottish Partnership against Rural Crime. Regional TTGs could engage with this.
- The proposal to develop further the social media presence of the Forum was discussed. It was agreed to take further advice on this from agency communications officers and larger haulage companies and report back to the Forum.
- Gillian Clark suggested the timber transport groups encourage timber haulier engagement in rural shows as was done recently by the agricultural sector for 1400 school children at the Kelso Show.

5. Approaching new Scottish Government

ACTION Alistair Speedie to write promptly to Fergus Ewing requesting a meeting to make the case for continued Scottish Government support for both the Forum and the STTF - requesting a longer term, e.g. 3-4 yr, tranche.

6. Funding

STTS continues to support the Forum's business plan with grant support to five project officers. A wider call for applications to Round 19 attracted 15 bids in May. A number have been turned down but several are being considered for support. The Branchliner study was deferred awaiting the outcome of the workshop arising from the previous project on rail haulage from the flow country. It is expected that the majority of bids being considered will be awarded funding by the end of June and that there will be funds remaining in the Scheme. Soon thereafter the Scheme will re-open for bids to be considered on a first come first served basis until September 2016.

7. Phytosanitary precautions

The Tree Health Advisory Group has requested that the Forum raise awareness of basic precautions to reduce spread of tree diseases. In particular we need to maintain the protected pest free area for *Dendroctonus micans* (Great Spruce Bark Beetle) around Argyll and Skye and Lochalsh allowing exports of timber to other EU States without treatment. The message is *Clean Your Wagon*.

ACTION Roland to post phytosanitary measures for timber haulage on TTF website and tweet and share with timber transport groups.

ACTION Roland to invite John Morgan of FC to next meeting to discuss plant health regime post 2019

8. APF Show

Confor's biennial [APF show](#) is 15th -17th September in Warwickshire. The Forum will again share a stand with James Jones and Tireboss, and be joined by Michelin. James Jones will provide a state-of-the-art lorry. We will host a talk on the features of the lorry by a James Jones representative. Forum or regional group members are welcome to help manage the stand over the three days.

9. Regional Updates

Wales

David Sulman noted that a timber haulier in Wales is being pursued by the council for damages relating to extraordinary traffic. The Royal Welsh Show is the 18-21st July and the Confor stand will host timber transport literature and banners.

North Yorkshire

The group is considering an autumn meeting.

North East England

Hazel Newman reported that representatives of the NE England group will be meeting with the council and the national park to discuss issues relating to timber transport and the Sill visitor centre which is under construction.

Highland

Colin Mackenzie said that four STTS bids had been submitted including one for an 18km haul road in Morvern involving 4 private owners and FCS.

Focus remains on the Flow Country with a forecast 150kt/yr plus 250kt windblow requiring prompt extraction. There has been ongoing discussion around a rail solution with 30 people attending a site visit and 45 people the following seminar. The forest owners are considering setting up a consortium to provide a client for a rail service. The roads authority may consider restricting road use to ensure all owners engage.

There have been incidents of non-compliance with the TTMP for the Flow Country roads – hired in trucks with no CTI, sometimes going in the wrong direction, demonstrating a lack of understanding of the purpose or detail of the plan. Robin Pope will be writing to members of the group reminding them of the need to follow agreed plans.

Gillian Clark asked whether there was scope to extend tracking systems to cover hired in trucks.

Scottish Borders

The recent meeting was well attended with 3 police representatives! The ARM has been reviewed. Two STTS bids were submitted but did not receive funding. James England is working with the council on project development but council priorities do not always fit STTS criteria.

Loading Timber from Roadside Forests has been well received and is resulting in better dialogue. James England has delivered training sessions with harvesting managers at Tilhill and Scottish Woodlands with good feedback.

A forwarder has caused minor damage to a stretch of strengthened public road attracting criticism. Good practice needs to be fed down the line to the hauliers and harvesting managers.

Dumfries and Galloway

The issues of future maintenance funding of the Eskdalemuir bypass remains under discussion.

James England contributed to a Wigtown Area Committee paper on timber transport issues where a councillor is lobbying for a review of the Agreed Routes Maps and protocols after damage was caused to a road.

In some instances the council can be slow to respond to the industry or offer conflicting direction from e.g. planning dept / roads authority.

Jamie Farquhar noted that FCS is about to sign off on the revised consultation procedures, developed by Syd House, mostly for Long Term Forest Plans and Felling Licenses. These are for transparent consultation arrangements between agencies and with councils and for a more accessible and user-friendly public register.

Ayrshire

Neil Dyson reported that the Ayrshire group is to meet shortly. The three council STTS bids for Ayrshire were rejected due to a lack of involvement with the industry so it is vital that the group work together.

10. AOB

Jamie Farquhar noted that the Review Report on Prior Notification for forest roads has been done and is due to go to Kevin Stewart MSP, the Minister responsible.

11. Date of next meeting

The next meeting is on 7th October 2016 in Edinburgh.

The meeting was followed by lunch courtesy of Egger, a tour of a very clean, state-of-the-art timber wagon, courtesy of R&H Scott – many thanks indeed to Scotty - and a tour of the Egger manufacturing plant - many thanks to Hazel and her colleagues.

