

**Timber Transport Forum Meeting
At Ferguson Transport,
Corpach, Fort William, Inverness-shire PH33 7NN
9.30 hrs, 16th June 2011**

Approved Minutes

AGENDA

Present:

Alistair Speedie (Chair), Jamie Farquhar, Kirsty Robb, Richard Scott, Cameron Maxwell, Alistair Ferguson, David Eaglesham, Roland Stiven, Neil Stoddart, Mike Green, Simon Oldham, Cameron Kemp, Neil Dyson, Ian Ross, Emily Maclean

Also Neil Wylie (Bigfoot),

From 11.00: Andy Rogers (BSW)

From lunch:

Christine McColl, Calum Boyd, Boyd Brothers
Liam Browning, Great Glen Shipping Company

Apologies:

Syd House, Fergus Tickell, Richard Evans, Kath McNulty, Crispin Thorn, Steven Herriott, Margaret Watson, James Gilroy, Will Anderson, David Hern, David Sulman, Andy Leitch, Ian Farmer

1. Welcome and Apologies

Alistair Speedie welcomed everyone to the meeting and site visit, outlined the day's programme and thanked Alasdair Ferguson for hosting the meeting. Neil Wylie of BigFoot CTI was welcomed as a visitor to the Forum. Neil was previously Head of Transport Research at The Logging Industry Research Organisation in New Zealand and is currently meeting with timber hauliers across Britain to promote the BigFoot tyre pressure control system.

2. New Members

The Forum welcomed Kirsty Robb as the new project officer for Argyll Timber Transport Group. Kirsty is from Argyll, is involved in managing the Scottish Forest and Timber Technologies groups (formerly the cluster groups) and is an experienced horse logger. She will be working about two days per week for the Argyll group. There will be a short period of overlap with Ian Arnold who is retiring from the post.

Alistair Speedie expressed the Forum's appreciation of Ian's substantial contribution to the work of the timber transport groups and to the Forum over the past decade.

3. Previous Minutes

The draft minutes of the previous meeting were approved with a revision to item 8.

Actions

- Information on SRDP support for timber transport to be collated for RDR. This will be carried forward again.
- Information to support discussions relating to timber haul routes and recreational access e.g. Core Path networks to be presented to Forum. This will be carried forward again.
- Ian Ross intends to present a paper on timber transport to COSLA in September.

- DfT did not respond to a further request to endorse the Road Haulage of Round Timber Code of Practice. They had previously been unable to field staff with sufficient breadth of responsibility to do so.
- Timber transport groups are discussing the monitoring and management of cumulative haulage .
- Timber transport groups have responded positively to holding VOSA/Police/Timber Haulier events across the country once the new Road Haulage of Round Timber Code of Practice has been published.

4. Funding Update

Strategic Timber Transport Scheme

Several projects from previous STTS rounds were still active in February 2011. Both applicants and STTS/FCS staff worked long hours to ensure that all project funding possible was claimed prior to the end of the financial year. Nearly all allocated funds were claimed. A full update of STTS funded work will be produced this summer.

Roland Stiven presented a paper (attached) showing:

- STTS allocations for extreme winter damage (last quarter of 2010-2011). A total of £875229 was allocated to match funding with local authorities for repair of winter damage to priority haul routes on the public road network. Councils worked hard to deliver repairs and claim funds within the short funding window prior to the end of March 2011.
- Offers of STTS grant made from the budget for 2011-2012.

Roland Stiven and Andy Leitch are working with FCS Press Officer and applicants to ensure positive local and national press coverage of completed and forthcoming STTS-funded works.

5. Regional Updates

• Highland

Cameron Kemp reported that HTTG welcomed the allocation of STTS funding for Highland projects in the coming year. The project officer role has been continued. The Flow Country is the main strategic focus for the group at present and the subject of a number of STTS supported projects. FCS has also enhanced the felling license consultation process which now formally requests the views of the roads authority.

• Argyll

Kirsty Robb reported that the revised Agreed Routes Map for Argyll and associated protocols have been distributed for comments (by end of June 2011). There remain communication issues to iron out. For example, a main access route to Riding's Sawmill was closed for repair at very short notice. David Eaglesham asked if the Forum could be a statutory consultee for road closures. Neil Dyson noted that South Scotland already performed this role – forwarding details of road closures to timber hauliers. Roland Stiven noted that there were already websites presenting this information that hauliers could link to.

ACTION: Neil Dyson to consider current mechanisms for accessing information on road closures and propose options to other groups.

- **Cumbria**

Richard Scott reported that the consultation process on the Agreed Routes Map was ongoing. The council were keen that the map had strong buy in at all levels and included parish council consultation. Responses had been largely constructive. There was some concern from parish councils that an 'agreed' status would result in increased HGV traffic, whereas in most cases this would not be the case. Need to clarify this in supporting information. Roland Stiven noted that the group was mindful of the need to ensure cross border liaison with N Yorkshire, Sth Scotland and Northumberland. In discussion over measures to address community concerns, Neil Stoddart brought up the scenario where timber hauliers were being caught up in planning conditions applied to windfarm developments which restricted haulage periods. Clarity is needed where this is not intended to restrict timber haulage.

- **Scottish Borders**

Simon Oldham reported that the Scottish Borders council had been pro-active and delivered a number of STTS supported winter damage repairs and, having successfully completed the extended upgrade of the B709, the council is in the process of preparing further STTS-supported work on the Polbae Road from Ettrick village.

The group is drafting a protocol aimed at reminding hauliers to avoid convoying of timber lorries – both for road management and traffic management reasons. Alasdair Ferguson said that transport managers can help in spacing out lorries but inevitably there are times when lorries become clustered. His advice to drivers is that if they can see the timber lorry in front – to slow down, or wait. Roland Stiven said that there would be a brief note on this in the revised Road Haulage of Round Timber Haulage Code of Practice. Also HTTG's 'Just a Minute' leaflet tackles this subject and could be more widely distributed or adopted. David Eaglesham suggested that such advice on avoiding convoying could be sent out in the RHA and FTA newsletters to raise the issue .

ACTION: Neil Dyson to progress guidance for Scottish Borders TTG to reduce convoying of timber lorries and share with Forum

Tweedsmuir Bridge has attracted column inches in local press. The group and the council are working with the Bridge Action Group to prepare an SSTS bid for a future round of funding.

- **Dumfries and Galloway**

STTS projects from previous rounds are almost completed (some minor items to finish). Winter damage repair work was extensive and used all available matching funding and resources. STTS projects submitted for this round, that were not supported, are continuing to be progressed in other ways with a view to addressing some of the issues.

Alistair Speedie explained the situation with the B729 which has been re-opened after experiencing severe damage following heavy road use during the winter thaw. £250k of STTS-supported winter damage repairs were made and allocation has been offered for a further £250k of STTS-supported improvements. The roads authority is working in the face of strong pressure from councillors to minimise the level of council expenditure on what they see as avoidable damage.

The road has to cope with multiple forest operations and hauliers. The council is working with forest industry representatives and hoping to formally agree robust but temporary road/traffic management measures to safeguard the road repairs/ improvements. Industry is concerned that such measures may prove to be overly restrictive on the supply chain. The group is keen to monitor and learn from this experience.

In discussion, Ian Ross noted that Highland Councillors can express similar concerns. Forest industries inevitably tend to receive a relatively low priority from councillor perspectives. We need to be proactive in managing issues and presenting solutions. Alistair Speedie said it is recognised that the supply chain is critical to the forest industries and while all agree that partnership is the way forward this should not mean that the councils are left being accountable for problems.

Roland Stiven noted that as pressures build from both increased volumes on the road and the broader context of declining road conditions, the Forum and the groups need to up their game in terms of proactive road and traffic management. Kirsty Robb described the agreement to use the Glen Striven Road in Argyll, involving a closely monitored CTI lorry, and also the agreed protocols for some fragile roads which it is intended will 'pop-up' on the Argyll agreed routes map stating the conditions of use for that road.. Cameron Kemp noted that vehicle tracking may become a suitable tool for helping to monitor and manage timber traffic on fragile roads.

D&G group keen to lobby for continued funding to STTS.

- **Ayrshire**

Neil Dyson reported that there is lots of timber moving on Ayrshire roads, mostly without issues arising. The Barrhill in-forest haul road is complete and while there are management issues with regard to the needs of windfarm and timber haulage users, the roads are well used and diverting traffic from particular public roads. Sth Ayrshire Council has re-engaged with the Ayrshire group which is planning an STTS bid for a Straiton bypass.

- **Grampian and Tayside & Stirling**

Emily Maclean reported that both groups had meetings in April and have draft action plans for the coming year.

Some Grampian communities have been vocal regarding timber lorries on C roads and group members are visiting people and writing to hauliers directly.

Future extraction and planting information is being extracted from Long Term Forest Plans with a view to considering how this data could be used for strategic timber transport planning.

Police contacts have been established for both groups and they will contribute as appropriate.

Next meeting planned as a joint event between the groups.

- **Wales**

Roland Stiven reported on the Wales Timber Transport Conference. This was a successful event with 36 people attending including five from local authorities. It was

professionally facilitated and created consensus on the way forward. A report is being produced and will be widely distributed, serving as a basis for revitalising the group, providing clear direction and priority actions, and serving as a mandate for lobbying Welsh Government. A meeting on the 20th June will take this forward. Special thanks to Kath McNulty, David Sulman, Colin Mackenzie, Richard Scott and Andrew Harper for contributing to the conference and helping to share best practice. David Sulman launched the Forum's Timber Transport Management Best Practice Guide.

- **North Yorkshire**

James Gilroy reported by email:

The Agreed Routes Map is up and running internally and should go live in the next couple of weeks. The delay was due to pressure from other work which has meant that the Timber Freight Quality Partnership has been on a backburner. There has been agreement from the Executive member for Highways (Cllr G Dadd) to recommence the FQP meetings- in July / August- to discuss routes map and other ongoing issues.

Progress has been made with two major issues:

- Felled timber at Cam (subject to lengthy negotiations at parish council level) has now been removed and efforts are being focussed on developing a new extraction route.
- Bumble Wood road damage has been addressed outside of full legal proceedings- some major lessons have been learned from this.

Discussions have taken place with several operators on planned extraction- (routes map has come in useful for this).

N Yorkshire would be supportive of working closely with Cumbria and Northumberland on strategic and procedural issues to ensure a level of consistency across the North of England.

6. TTF Updates

- Road Haulage of Round Timber Code of Practice is being finalised and awaiting publication
- The Forum has made a [submission](#) to the Forestry Regulation Taskforce.
- Timber Transport Management Best Practice Guidance is available [online](#) and in hard copy from [Roland Stiven](#) and is being distributed through groups, partners and events.
- The Forum plans to be represented at Scotland's Transport Future in a Changing World" conference in Aviemore in September and will aim to share a stand with a suitable partner.
- The Forum intends to respond to the DfT consultation on longer articulated lorries. A draft has been circulated. Discussion on this suggested that the response should be more positive, recognising possible roles for longer artics in some parts of the supply chain while highlighting infrastructural limitations in rural areas. Comments requested by deadline of 21st June.

7. Post Election Lobbying in Scotland

Cameron Maxwell said that a comprehensive spending review is being progressed over the summer and we can expect there will be less money available. The Scottish Government's summer cabinet tour (including Fort William, Elgin and Stranraer) will be an opportunity to

inform Stewart Stevenson the Forestry Minister. Jamie Farquhar noted that ConFor has issued an invitation to meet with the minister and would take the opportunity to highlight the work of the Forum in the supply chain. Fergus Ewing is setting up a wood processing industry summit in relation to biomass demands from the Renewable Heating Incentive. We should make links with the biomass agenda – maximise the domestic resource available and ensure security of supply etc.

Neil Stoddart said that Stewart Stevenson visited the floating pier set up on Raasay on a visit to the island as Transport Minister earlier in the year - and was impressed by the system.

Ian Ross urged the Forum to be proactive in making its case and to seize all opportunities.

Alistair Speedie said he would aim to raise the issue in forthcoming meetings with the minister.

ACTION: Roland Stiven and Alistair Speedie to work directly, and with FCS and ConFor to create opportunities to discuss the Forum's agenda with Scottish Government Ministers.

8. Access and Haul Routes

Jamie Farquhar has agreed to prepare a paper for the Core Path Forum meeting on 9th November. The main issue is the primacy of H&S over access. The law assumes responsible access but the forest industries cannot rely on this.

9. Date of Next Meeting

22nd September 2011

RECENT STTS Allocations

| STTS Winter Damage Allocations (last quarter 2010-2011) | | |
|--|---|------------------|
| | | |
| RR1-1-2011 | Argyll & Bute Council | £ 176,500 |
| RR1-2-2011 | Dumfries & Galloway Council B729 | £ 134,350 |
| RR1-3-2011 | East Ayrshire Council | £ 16,000 |
| RR1-4-2011 | Highland Council A837 Oykel Brae | £ 25,000 |
| RR1-5-2011 | North Ayrshire Council | £ 50,000 |
| RR1-6-2011 | South Ayrshire Council | £ 40,000 |
| RR1-7-2011 | Scottish Borders Council | £ 50,000 |
| RR1-8-2011 | South Lanarkshire Council | £ 5,000 |
| RR1-9-2011 | Highland Council West Inverness | £ 39,488 |
| RR1-10-2011 | Highland Council Flow Country | £ 25,000 |
| RR1-11-2011 | Dumfries and Galloway A714 | £ 54,993 |
| RR1-12-2011 | Dumfries and Galloway A709, B6357, B723 | £ 178,557 |
| RR1-13-2011 | Dumfries and Galloway Council | £ 80,342 |
| TOTAL | | £ 875,229 |

| STRATEGIC TIMBER TRANSPORT SCHEME 2011-2012 Expected Allocations | Grant offered (16th June 11) | |
|---|--|----------------------|
| | | |
| Project Officer ATTG (Argyll) | 15000 | |
| Project Officer S&TTG GTTG | 19650 | |
| Project Officer HTTG carry over (Highland) | 21500 | |
| Project officer SOSTTO (South Scotland) | 16750 | |
| Project Officer TTF (Scotland) | 22000 | |
| Flow Country: Strategy (Highland) | 30000 | |
| South West Cowal (Argyll) | 321037 | |
| Flow Country: Roundwood by Rail (Highland) | 186615 | |
| Mull Timber Pier Cidhe Fiodh Muile (Argyll) | 420000 | To be confirmed |
| Rathad na Mara Morvern (Highland) | 185860 | |
| Brenchoille R11-4-2010 revised (Argyll) | 69300 | |
| B729 Strengthening (A713 to C35 Lorg junction) (D&G) | 120000 | |
| Flow Country: Altnabreac Legal Framework (Highland) | 25750 | |
| B871 & B873 passing places (Highland) | 50000 | |
| Craik/Potburn Project (Scottish Borders) | 319500 | |
| Logie Bridge Refurbishment (Highland) | 100000 | |
| Sub Total | 1922962 | |
| Laverhay to Boreland (D&G) | 243910 | Waiting in the wings |
| C15 Andershaw Road, Glespin (Sth Lanark.) | 0 | |
| SW Glendaruel Timber Haul Route (Argyll) | 0 | |
| Shinnel Glen (D&G) | 0 | |
| Slogarie link road (D&G) | 0 | |
| Tormore Forest Sea Extraction (Highland) | 0 | |
| Drannadow D&G) | | Defer |
| Flow Country: Altnabreac Braehour Link Road Construction (Highland) | | Defer |
| Arran Strategic Timber Transport (N. Ayrshire) | | Defer |
| Hareshawmuir Road (E Ayrshire) | | No |

Draft Press Release

The [Timber Transport Forum](#) held its quarterly meeting in June, not in its usual venue at the Forestry Commission in Edinburgh but instead at Corpach near Fort William which is a growing hub for intermodal timber transport in Scotland. The meeting was hosted by [Ferguson Transport](#), one of the region's larger timber hauliers.

Having dispensed with regular business, the group of 16 Forum members (from local authorities, forest industries and the Forestry Commission) were given presentations by Alasdair Ferguson, Managing Director of Ferguson Transport and Andy Rogers of BSW Timber Ltd.

Ferguson Transport runs around 40 lorries and 90 trailers, including eight round-timber wagons (five artics and three drawbar combinations), two of which are fitted with tyre pressure control systems. The company has bases around the Highlands (including port facilities at Kishorn and Mallaig) as well as at Grangemouth. Fergusons also manage coastal shipping with two boats providing for fish farms and other freight. Employing around 100 staff, the company remains a family firm with 3 generations of the Ferguson family involved.

Fergusons new premises at Corpach includes the company's main office, and a modern, clean vehicle maintenance workshop, which services their own fleet and other commercial vehicles. The yard also hosts a VOSA inspection and tachograph centre providing local hauliers with facilities which previously required a trip to Inverness. The buildings include washing and rest facilities for drivers and a training room. The transport managers benefit from a growing proportion of the fleet being fitted with the Dynafleet transport information system helping to manage vehicles efficiently and look after drivers.

Fergusons haul much of the sawn timber output from the nearby [BSW Timber](#) sawmill. BSW is gradually transferring across the road to new premises close to Fergusons on the site of the old Corpach pulp mill. The new mill will include biomass-fired drying kilns and a secondary processing line, adding value to the timber. It also includes a rail siding branching off the adjacent West Highland line. With most of the timber products heading for markets in the south, BSW and Ferguson Transport are investigating the practicalities and economics of re-opening the siding and shifting some of the haulage from road to rail through a multi-user railhead, handling timber and other freight.

After lunch, the Forum members were shown around the Ferguson Transport yard and then walked across to neighbouring Boyd Brothers Ltd, another timber haulage company with a log yard and operating centre on the old pulp mill site. Calum Boyd showed Forum members around the port facilities where, in conjunction with

Clydeports, they handle much of the coastal shipping of BSW's output of wood chips as well bringing in logs from coastal forests in Scotland. With Forum members standing in the warm Fort William sunshine, a load of logs were discharged from the coastal vessel 'Boisterous' using a huge mobile multi docker crane.

Boyd Brothers are one of a number of private partners in the Great Glen Shipping Company. This recent venture has been shipping logs from west coast Scotland, up the Caledonian Canal to Inverness, for onward haulage to the Norbord Ltd panelboard plant at Dalcross. Liam Browning described current work to replace the hired vessel they have been using with a purchased boat that will be 'cut in half and stuck back together' - resized to fit neatly into the lock systems and width of the Caledonian Canal and increasing the log load to around 500 tonnes.

The volume of logs coming from Scottish forests will continue to increase in the coming decade and there is substantial investment in processing capacity creating jobs and low carbon materials. The supply chain relies on cost effective and carbon efficient transport solutions. Road haulage remains the primary mode of timber transport in Scotland and will continue to need investment in modern bespoke vehicles and good transport management. However the Forum is also keen to see industry developing opportunities to increase timber haulage by rail and coastal shipping where feasible making use of government support through the Freight Facilities Grant and the Strategic Timber Transport Fund.

Alistair Speedie, chair of the Forum said "I would like to [thank Ferguson Transport for their kind hospitality](#). The Forum members were greatly impressed by the company's developments and inspired by the range of creative solutions being progressed by the timber haulage industry in the Highlands.





