

Minutes

Ayrshire & South Lanarkshire Timber Transport Group

Meeting 16th February, 2018 at 10:30am

Cunninghame House in Irvine

North Ayrshire Council, Cunninghame House, Irvine, KA12 8EE

***Attendees:** Neil Dyson, David Hilditch, Steven Parr, Tommy Thorburn, Alex Murray, Murray Rowan, Tom Tryon, Mike Yerbury, Bill Tyre, Sandie Greenwood, Colin Hulme, Malcolm Murray, Kerstin Leslie, Jamie Farquhar, Keith Wishart, Derek Nelson, Neil Murray, Kate Sheppard, Andrew Shendon, Andrew Kennedy.*

***Apologies:** Roland Stiven, Duncan Macinnon, Doug Howieson, Kevin Braidwood, Andrei Martucci*

1. Welcome, introduction & apologies.

JE commented that this was the best attendance we have had for any meeting in Ayrshire and thanked everyone for coming. ND opened the meeting and ran through the agenda which JE chaired.

2. Chairman stepping down therefore nominations and voting for new Chair of the Group.

A large part of the meeting was taken up with a discussion over a new Chair for the group. JE thanked ND for his input into the group and for providing great assistance to JE in his role as Timber Transport Officer. JE asked for nominations for Chair and Alex Murray was unanimously elected to the post. Neil Murray was also elected as Deputy Chair.

3. Local Timber Transport Issues:

- a. **Police report** – PC Malcolm Murray asked if training for Officers on Timber Transport could be arranged **JE Action.**
- b. **North Ayrshire Council** – discussion over Machrie on Arran and the refusal of the Planning Application for a barging point due to impacts on National Scenic area. DH said it was a difficult situation as they wanted to support the proposals and NAC Roads Department did. NM highlighted the challenge that 25% of Arran was in productive conifers and that there is a timber supply crisis in getting it to market. JE highlighted that it was disappointing as the proposals were well thought out, would cause minimal disturbance and were sensitive to the location. **JE to respond /assist.**
- c. **Roads Alliance** - South Ayrshire Council /East Ayrshire Council. SP highlighted concerns from a timber haulage operation at Lambdoughty from Barr Community Council over persistent timber haulage at 3am instead of 6:30am which had been agreed. SP stated he had taken decisive action and banned the haulier from site. DN highlighted that this was appropriate and that every effort should be taken to defend the voluntary partnership arrangements we have.
- d. **South Lanarkshire Council** – none were discussed.
- e. **Road Closure Reports** – JE ensuring that the high impact closures are passed on in a timely fashion. Sometimes there is a short window of opportunity to carry out road repairs due to weather or other factors so don't shoot the messenger.

Minutes

4. Update on Haulage activities.

Roads have suffered under the harsh winter conditions and JE commented that it was down to everyone to report and sensibly manage roads that are deteriorating. Also need to be aware that resources are stretched. BT Lots of timber moving around the region due to good market conditions.

AM mentioned about a recent summit meeting that was held with Ministers (5th February) to look at timber shortages for the processing sector. Concerns that were raised and discussed were:

- Access to timber often proving difficult;
- High prices;
- Not much timber coming to market;
- Sawmills on limited shifts due to lack of logs;
- Forest Plans being looked at to see if felling phases can be brought forward by 6 months;
- KW stated that they were writing to Forest Plan owners who have 2019-2020 felling phases with a view to discussing consent to bring them forward;
- NM highlighted that the difficult weather hadn't helped.

5. South of Scotland Timber Transport (SoSTTO) Updates

Has attended many Community Council meetings and has been busy with meetings over potential STTS bids.

JE then highlighted concerns with his role and set out the challenges he faces on a daily basis:

- Increasing workload and often working evenings to keep on top of correspondence;
- Spread too thinly across the South of Scotland, given large amount of activity – has meant at times difficult to service Ayrshire and South Lanarkshire;
- Significant number of complaints, multiple harvesting operations, increase in Councillor complaints needing quick answers.

AM – highlighted that timber production is set to increase significantly over the next 10 years with the local processing sector already consuming circa 1.2 million tonnes per annum. In addition, the region offered a huge potential for new woodland expansion and concluded that it was now time that a dedicated Project Officer resource was explored. AM stressed that this wasn't a criticism of JE and the good work that he does but that he recognised that it wasn't possible to continue with the increasing demands in Dumfries & Galloway, Scottish Borders. It was felt that this would be a part time post of 2-3 days a week that would be advertised and interviews held to select the best candidate.

AM proposed that a dedicated Project Officer be explored and funding be sought from the private sector and local authorities to support this part - time role. The consensus was that this would be taken forward and JE welcomed this move as it would give a dedicated resource. DH expressed concerns over funding and ND suggested that there would need to be an adequate handover / shadowing of any new person. JE mentioned that the likes of North Ayrshire Council would support the new Project Officer but should not pay twice and

Minutes

that he would shadow / support any new Project Officer. KW stated that FCS would look to contribute to the role.

Action JE/AM

- a. **Revised Ayrshire Agreed Routes Map (ARM) map** – this was circulated for feedback. JE thanked John Scott for assisting with the review meeting which was extremely helpful given his collective knowledge of local roads in the region.
BT – asked about the consultation process which was discussed. He felt that sometimes it was a one way process with feedback on haulage proposals being difficult to obtain even when JE got involved. AM mentioned about looking into a consultation template form so that timber haulage consultations were standardised with two-way input between the proposer and local authority concerned.
- b. **Revised Timber Transport Strategy**
 - i. Discuss feedback received that has been collated – discussed the strategy and AM felt it would be a good piece of work for the new Project Officer to work on.
 - ii. Timeline for amendments and final document production. To be revisited once new Project Officer is in post.
- c. **Ayrshire Transport Summit & Plant Health** – NM/JE/DN attended the Ayrshire Transport summit and the working groups covered many different themes but we got across the importance of timber transport and the often overlooked rural road network that is relied upon.
Impacts of diseased larch were discussed and it was felt that the situation could be worse than what had been feared. Likely to be a big push on disease control in coming months.
- d. **Strategic Timber Transport Fund Update**
 - i. **Ayrshire STTS projects & Updates.** As they have in recent times been one year bids they have sometimes been difficult to get the more complex projects going and to date there have been a lack of Private Sector bids coming forward.
 - ii. **STTS Funding for 2018/2019** – yet to be announced but hopeful.
 - iii. **Potential bids in the region** – 2017/2018 fully committed. DN bids need to come from the group collectively with industry support. Important to get ideas into quality bids. DN reminded that he was quite happy to review the two page outline bid for potential projects.

6. Timber Transport Forum Update

1. Timber Transport Conference 2018

Drumossie Hotel Inverness on 23rd March 2018.

Processors will talk about the challenge of sourcing timber over a fragile road network. The Highland Council will focus discussion on the management of the longest length of minor road in the UK. The regulators will inform us on the extent to which our current infrastructure should influence where we plant new forests. We will be talking about safe haulage, safe forest roads and learning about some of the recent projects to improve transport infrastructure. We shall also have a look down the road at the future of haulage; smart highways, platooning lorries – where will technology take us?

Minutes

Book here <http://timbertransportforum.org.uk/latest/events/186-conference-23rd-march-2018>

2. Timber Transport Videos

The Forum has produced two short videos – a 5 minute and 2 minute version – on the importance of investing in rural roads for freight. Currently available here

Long version: <https://vimeo.com/238952711/c9192b6b67>

Short version: <https://vimeo.com/238953637/08df2ff122>

3. Agreed Route Map

These are in place for Scotland and north England and the online map is being brought back in house by the Forum.

4. Strategic Timber Transport Scheme

<http://scotland.forestry.gov.uk/supporting/forest-industries/timber-transport/strategic-timber-transport-fund>

The STTF budget for 2017-18 of £7.85m (£7.05m available to scheme has been fully allocated. We are hopeful that we can attract a similar level of funding again next year and timber transport groups are being encouraged to draw up lists of possible projects and confirm levels of local authority co-finance likely to be available.

5. FISA Haulage Working Group

The Forum works in partnership with the FISA [Forest Haulage Working Group](#) which has just revised their Forest Haulage Driver Safety Manual

6. Grant support for coastal shipping

Transport Scotland has been asked to hold a workshop on the applicability of existing Scottish Government Freight Grants to coastal shipping of timber. It is hoped this will be held later in the year.

7. Exit/Entrance survey and guidance

A project to look at exit/entrance issues and specifications is being developed and a proposed brief will be circulated.

8. National Transport Strategy

The Forum is feeding into the Scottish National Transport Strategy and the response to the call for evidence can be found [here](#). The Forum is also closely involved in a rural sub group of the Scottish Government's advisory group on freight and logistics highlighting the issues around rural freight infrastructure.

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7. A. O. C. B.

Forest Haulage Driver Safety Manual has now been finalised. JE highlighted about a recent contact from DVSA over load strapping and highlighted the safety bulletin on load strapping (attached).

8. Date of Next Meeting - to be confirmed and venue to be agreed.