

Minutes for GTTG meeting

Date: 14 March 2018

Location: Forestry Commission Scotland Grampian Conservancy, Portsoy Road, Huntly AB54 4SJ

Present:

Will Anderson – Chair (WA)

Jim Cargill – Nestrans (JC)

Neil Crookston – Scottish Woodlands (NC)

Niall Duncan – Tilhill (ND)

Cameron Gillies – Euroforest (CG)

Claire Glaister – GTTG Project Officer (CGI)

Lee Grigor – James Jones & Sons (LG)

Jonathan Ritchie – James Jones & Sons (JR)

Harry John Wilson – RTS (HJW)

Alastair Young – FES (AY)

Apologies

Ian Cameron – Moray Council (IC)

Euan Christie – AW Jenkinson (EC)

Ian Cowe – Forestry Commission Scotland (ICo)

Derek Murray – Aberdeenshire Council (DM)

Derek Nelson – Forestry Commission Scotland (DN)

Roland Stiven – Timber Transport Forum (RS)

Agenda Item	Action	Appointed person/s
7. (17/03/16)	GTTG to discuss/agree requested change to ARM classification of U144H	All
6. (14/07/16)	Pull together events programme for discussion with members	RS/CGI/LAs
3. (12/12/16)	Discuss potential planning permission conditions for road improvements at Conyachie Road end	DM
9. (12/12/16)	Confirm Prior Notification situation with Confor	RS
3. (16/03/17)	Discuss potential for STTS application for an in-forest route through the Gownie road forest complex	NC/CGI
3. (15/11/17)	Contact industry representatives for production data and priority roads	CGI/industry
3. (15/11/17)	Attend FFG workshop and report back to GTTG	CGI
6. (15/11/17)	Discuss STTS eligibility/Prior Notification requirements with RS	CG/RS
2.	Check existence of minimum tonnage thresholds with other RTTGs and clarify position in FCS Grampian	CGI
2.	Discuss options to include ARM layer on LIS with TTF	CGI/RS
3.	Invite Local Authorities to provide nominated timber transport contact/s details for circulation/posting on GTTG Local Contacts web page	CGI/LAs
3.	Organise summer workshop with input (programme/sites/location) from members	CGI/All
5.	Clarify reporting period (e.g. calendar year/financial year) for SCOTS refresh	CGI
5.	Circulate FCS guidance on CAR changes, when available	CGI

1. Welcome, introductions and apologies

WA welcomed all those present, particularly to Jim, who is a new member of the GTTG; Jim is the recently appointed Freight Advisor for [Nestrans](#), the Transport Partnership for Aberdeen City and Shire. CG confirmed that a number of apologies had been received and that these would be added to the minutes.

2. Notes of last meeting on 15 November 2017 & matters arising

The minutes of the last meeting were confirmed as correct. Action table below has been amended to reflect current status (those now completed have been shaded; carried forward actions added to current action table above).

Agenda Item	Action	Appointed person/s
7. (19/11/15)	Confirm minimum tonnage thresholds for consultation on felling licences at meeting with FCS	IC/DM
7. (17/03/16)	GTTG to discuss/agree requested change to ARM classification of U144H	All
6. (14/07/16)	Pull together events programme for discussion with members	RS/CG/LAs
3. (12/12/16)	Identify roads where potential STTS works would be beneficial	All
3. (12/12/16)	Discuss potential planning permission conditions for road improvements at Conyachie Road end	DM
8. (12/12/16)	Discuss effectiveness of internal circulation of consultation invitations – confirmed during meeting	DM
9. (12/12/16)	Confirm Prior Notification situation with Confor	RS
3. (16/03/17)	Discuss potential for STTS application for an in-forest route through the Gownie road forest complex	NC/CG
4. (12/07/17)	Approve revised GTTG protocols – actioned during meeting	All
3. (15/11/17)	CG to contact STTS admin team to clarify issue or remittance advices	CG
3. (15/11/17)	IC to advise CG of completed works and arrange site inspection	IC/CG/RS
3. (15/11/17)	CG to circulate details of overall STTS funding figures	CG
3. (15/11/17)	Contact industry representatives for production data and priority roads	CG/industry
3. (15/11/17)	Attend FFG workshop and report back to GTTG	CG
4. (15/11/17)	Finalise managing timber transport protocols, post on GTTG web page and circulate to GTTG members and industry colleagues	CG
5. (15/11/17)	Circulate copy of timber haulage questionnaire to members	CG
6. (15/11/17)	Discuss STTS eligibility/Prior Notification requirements with RS	CG/RS
7. (15/11/17)	Circulate Transport Scotland contact details to CG	ICo
7. (15/11/17)	Request higher profile of new ARM website on TTF website	CG/RS

Confirm minimum tonnage thresholds for consultation on felling licences at meeting with FCS: Members have previously discussed mismatch between long standing 1000 tonne threshold (below which prior consultation was not considered essential) and more recent 500 tonnes limit apparently introduced at a meeting between FCS and LAs. Members identified that there still appears to be confusion over which level is in operation with the 1000 tonne threshold used by FCS for FLAs, operational examples (e.g. Stoneyfield) and in Local Authority Forestry Extraction Guidelines. AY advised that it's within FCS' control to put FLAs out to consultation and that there should be consistency between Conservancies. CGI to check with other RTTGs to see if/what thresholds are used in other areas and to seek clarification on the position with FCS Grampian Conservancy (superseding 19/11/15 action).

Request higher profile of new ARM website on TTF website: CGI advised members that their previous request has been actioned with the [Agreed Route Maps](#) page on the TTF website being given a higher profile and now only making reference to the current ARM.

As Agreed Routes classifications can be a consideration in new woodland creation applications, members agreed that it would be useful to show the ARM layer on the Land Information Search so that potential constraints could be identified on one website. WA wondered if this would be possible as LIS is not a FCS-owned website so CGI to clarify options with TTF/FCS.

3. Turning industry guidance into on-the-ground practice

3.1 Communicating the message

Members had a broad-ranging discussion regarding a couple of current issues where either good practice had apparently not been followed or unreasonable expectations had been requested of industry.

The first, a haulage operation which caused significant damage to a minor rural road, seems to have been exacerbated by the fact that the only consultation held between the agent and Local Authority was with someone from the LA who was not involved in timber transport and that no further consultation had been held.

Members thought it would be useful if the names of nominated timber transport contacts from each Local Authority could be made available; ND suggested that the [Highland Timber Transport Group Local Contacts](#) web page could be a model to follow as this provides specific names and contact details for the different road areas. CGI to invite Local Authorities to provide a nominated contact so that their details can be posted on the GTTG Local Contacts web page. In the meantime however, CGI reminded members that Moray and Aberdeenshire Council are both represented on the GTTG and should they have any queries/concerns, these can be directed to Ian or Derek in the first instance. JC offered to liaise with the LAs to highlight the benefits of identifying key personnel, if this was required.

The second case involved an initial LA request that all loading operations should be kept back 75m from the public road; following discussions, this requirement was withdrawn. The agent acknowledged that changes in LA staff may have resulted in the request being made but expressed concern over the impact on operations that had (harvesting was delayed)/would have been caused and the time/input that had been needed to resolve matters.

Members were similarly concerned about the impact such restrictions would place on the sector and asked if other rural industries would be required to follow the same conditions. To help address concerns, it was suggested that instead of holding our usual indoor meeting, a summer outdoor workshop be arranged. This would enable industry and Local Authority representatives to go out on site, view some of the operational challenges from both a forestry harvesting/haulage and road network management point of view and encourage a better understanding of each other's responsibilities/measures used to reduce risks.

JC asked if the sort of requirements that should be expected were readily available for reference. HJW explained how Timber Traffic Management Plans can be developed and that these show what sort of management options can be used. CGI also explained that we have the [Timber Transport Management Protocols](#) which, as well as giving information on TTMPs, also describe some advisory traffic management measures for the four different AMR classifications.

4. Strategic Timber Transport Scheme update and GTTG projects

4.1 Potential projects for the short, medium and longer term

As there were no Local Authority representatives present at the meeting, members didn't cover this area in any great detail. IC had however provided a list of roads that they wished to consider for a 2018/19 STTS application which was circulated during the meeting. Members were happy that these be considered further and that IC/WA/CGI work together, on behalf of the group, to enable an application to be submitted.

CGI advised members that Aberdeenshire Council were keen to submit a proposal for the 2018/19 bidding round and would similarly work with DM and WA to progress the application.

4.2 Preparatory Project Grants (PPGs)

CGI reminded members of the opportunity to apply for a PPG in order to work up more complex/larger scale project applications.

4.3 Pros and Cons of a 3 year versus 1 year funding programme

Members recognised the benefits in having access to STTS funding over a longer term but also that confirming match funding, particularly Local Authority match funding, would be a challenge.

4.4 Assessing the wider benefits of STTS projects

CGI updated members of work being undertaken to develop a means of assessing the wider benefits of STTS projects (e.g. landscape/biodiversity/recreation/carbon sequestration values). More specifically, DN has been working with FCS economists to develop an assessment tool which enables a value to be attributed to various benefits depending on the input of specific data (e.g. length of public road, ARM classification, number of households within region etc.). CGI stressed that the Project Officer would assist in the completion of the assessment tool and that a pilot project may be used to test the system before wider roll out.

5. GTTG members updates

5.1 Round table updates and topical discussion

AY updated members of the forthcoming changes in FES organisation and explained that the existing 10 [Forest Districts](#) would be reduced to 5 regions with Moray & Aberdeenshire FD amalgamating with Tay FD. Whilst this would mean a wider area was covered by each region, there will still be an office location here in Huntly (and similarly down in Dunkeld).

AY also highlighted that following some concerns over 6m+ stack heights, FES are reviewing their risk assessments for timber stacks, particularly in relation to standing sales. Members agreed that any stack height in excess of 2m needs to be covered by a separate risk assessment and that the type of timber lorry used may affect stack height.

The role of FISA guidelines was discussed and the question asked whether such guidelines were needed **in addition to** the [Road Haulage of Round Timber Code of Practice](#). CG advised that he saw timber hauliers being the primary audience for the FISA guidelines and haulage managers the Code of Practice.

In terms of the type of vehicle, JR updated members of the use of remote loading/high vision lorries which have now been introduced to the James Jones fleet. Whilst this doesn't offer any significant weight saving, it improves operator safety and could be a way of encouraging new entrants into the industry. Members discussed other technical aspects of this type of lorry (e.g. distance proximity alarms, Bluetooth weighing systems etc.) and JR advised that one of their lorries will be on display at the Timber Transport Forum Conference on 23 March 2018.

JC provided an overview of his role in/the work of Nestrans and highlighted where some initiatives may be relevant to the forestry/timber sector. For example, JC wondered if Aberdeen Port might be a useful route for the transport of timber and asked if future demand for such facilities could be quantified. Industry members explained that the timber supply market is volatile and apart from some fixed term supply contracts, will be very dependent on exchange rates and the home market; currently, the home market for timber is strong in the North East. The role of consolidation centres was also discussed, as too the opportunities for/challenges in transporting timber by rail.

CGI advised members that a refresh of the SCOTS forest output and access survey was being planned for later this year/early next so that information on timber tonnages can be updated for use in future STTS proposals. Members asked if the start date of data collection could be clarified (i.e. calendar year/financial year) as some may be operating on different timescales. AY highlighted that this work is a good way of demonstrating how industry can work with Local Authorities to improve the road network; a positive message that could be used if owners/agents weren't all that forthcoming with data!

CGI also provided a brief summary of proposed changes to the Water Environment (Controlled Activities) (Scotland) Regulations (CAR), explaining that these may affect forestry roads (construction and upgrading). FCS are currently involved in discussion with SEPA and will be provided guidance in due course; this will be circulated to members once available.

6. Date of next meeting/s

To be confirmed