

Minutes for GTTG meeting

Date: 15 November 2017

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

Present:

Will Anderson – Chair (WA)

Ian Cameron – Moray Council (IC)

Steve Conolly – Cawdor Forestry (SC)

Ian Cowe - Forestry Commission Scotland (ICo)

Neil Dyson – Land Management (ND)

Claire Glaister – GTTG Project Officer (CG)

Lee Grigor – James Jones & Sons (LG)

Ben Hazell – Tilhill (BH)

Derek Murray – Aberdeenshire Council (DM)

Andrew Nicol – RTS/DWP (AN)

Harry J Wilson – RTS (HJW)

Apologies

Neil Crookston – Scottish Woodlands

Cameron Gillies – Euroforest

Derek Nelson – Forestry Commission Scotland

Roland Stiven – Timber Transport Forum

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.	CG to contact STTS admin team to clarify issue or remittance advices	CG
3.	IC to advise CG of completed works and arrange site inspection	IC/CG/RS
3.	CG to circulate details of overall STTS funding figures	CG
3.	Contact industry representatives for production data and priority roads	CG/industry
3.	Attend FFG workshop and report back to GTTG	CG
4.	Finalise managing timber transport protocols, post on GTTG web page and circulate to GTTG members and industry colleagues	CG
5.	Circulate copy of timber haulage questionnaire to members	CG
6.	Discuss STTS eligibility/Prior Notification requirements with RS	CG/RS
7.	Circulate Transport Scotland contact details to CG	ICo
7.	Request higher profile of new ARM website on TTF website	CG/RS

1. Welcome, introductions and apologies

WA welcomed all those present, particularly to Harry, who is a new member of the GTTG. 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 12 July 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).

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3. (16/07/15)	Provide NFI/SCOTS data to Jacobs once preferred route has been confirmed	CG
3. (19/11/15)	Provide shape files for SCOTS exit points and ARMs to aid LA review of ARMs	CG/LAs
7. (19/11/15)	Confirm minimum tonnage thresholds for consultation on felling licences at meeting with FCS	IC/DM
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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
6. (16/03/17)	Follow up progress with A96 preferred route options with Transport Scotland	ICo/CG
4. (12/07/17)	Prepare and submit response to Public Petition PE1654	CG/WA
4. (12/07/17)	Review and update GTTG protocols to reflect FISA MHSF Duty Holder roles	CG
4. (12/07/17)	Approve revised GTTG protocols	All
5. (12/07/17)	Circulate Transport Scotland A96 Dualling project web link to members	CG
5. (12/07/17)	Circulate Confor analysis paper and Forestry Act 1967	CG

Provide NFI/SCOTS data to Jacobs once preferred route has been confirmed & Follow up progress with A96 preferred route options with Transport Scotland: CG circulated a request for updated forest exit/production forecasts from forest owners/managers in August to inform the Mott MacDonald Sweco Joint Venture (MMS). Information was provided to MMS in August 2107.

Provide shape files for SCOTS exit points and ARMs to aid LA review of ARMs: CG circulated information in September detailing how the new ARM website has a facility through which ARM shape files can be downloaded; the SCOTS exit point data has previously been supplied to Local Authorities on a CD.

3. Strategic Timber Transport Scheme update and GTTG projects

3.1 Update on STTS and 2017/18 projects

IC advised members that work on the Moray Council project is on track and that an interim claim has been submitted and paid (following a site visit with CG). IC highlighted however that no remittance advice had been issued with the claim payment and requested that this be raised with FCS/STTS admin team. In terms of the remaining project works, IC will contact CG once this has been completed to arrange a final site inspection.

WA asked how the recycling work completed under previous projects is working; IC confirmed that it is holding up well.

LG asked what spread of funding has been awarded across all projects. CG directed members to the [list of successful projects](#) in the last bidding round and the [Strategic Timber Transport Fund Update Report](#) from April 2016.

ND highlighted that it was good to see a broad allocation across lots of bids and that having a waiting list is good evidence for requesting further support. IC suggested that match funding is likely to be an issue in future years.

3.2 Potential projects for 2018/19

In terms of GTTG-specific STTS bids, IC and DM advised that they would be interested in submitting proposals for 2018/19 but that input from industry will be essential; to ensure that any work proposed is on the highest priority routes and matches with forecast harvesting programmes and to minimise risk of works looking more like routine maintenance.

LG suggested that tying in works with felling licences would be useful. Members discussed use of the SCOTS data and whether the next survey should request timber production figures annually for the first 5-year period, if internal communication between LA Planning and Roads departments has improved (IC and DM reported that it has) and how the need to consult with LAs prior to felling licence/forest plan submissions is a fundamental and crucial part of the process.

CG was actioned to contact all industry representatives and request details of forthcoming harvesting programmes and priority routes for improvement.

CG advised members that other sources of funding are available which can be relevant to the forest industry, most notably the [Freight Facilities Grant](#). Following a request at the last TTF meeting, a workshop is to be arranged early in 2018 for potential applicants and those wishing to find out more.

As well as more infrastructure-related projects, GTTG members also discussed a 2018/19 project to support a Project Officer position. All members were happy for a bid to be submitted and to support this on-going role. Should any member be unable to provide monetary support over the next financial year, members were asked to contact CG or Roland Stiven.

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

4.1 Communicating with forest agents (follow up from FCS PandA forest agents' liaison event)

CG explained to GTTG members that following their previous discussions and those at the S&TTTG meeting, she was invited to give a timber transport presentation at a FCS Forest Agents Liaison event (August 2017). As actioned at the last GTTG meeting, she has also approached the Chair of the [North East Scotland Forest and Timber Technologies Industry Regional Group](#) with a view to making a similar presentation to this audience too. WA suggested that once this presentation had been given, it would be useful to post onto the [GTTG Local Guidance](#) web page for reference.

4.2 Updated timber transport management protocols and guidance

Revised copies of *A Guide to Managing Timber Transport* and the *Timber Transport Management Protocols* had been circulated to members in advance of the meeting and included the changes requested at the last GTTG meeting (cross-reference to H&S Duty Holder roles). Members approved the amendments so CG to finalise and post on the GTTG Local Guidance web page and circulate to members and other industry colleagues.

5. Timber haulier focus

5.1 Load security and strapping

By way of an introduction to this agenda item, a [Motorbike Monday video](#) was played. Members discussed the possible circumstances behind/consequences of the incident, current UK good practice and that recently issued by Coillte (see attached). LG highlighted that it is the responsibility of the haulier to ensure the load is secure (including taking cognisance of existing guidance) and that there needs to be a degree of flexibility to account for different conditions. ND suggested that the policy position stated in the [Road Haulage of Round Timber Code or Practice](#) is good but that policing it is key. ICo advised that we need to find a way of complying with existing codes of practice before this is changed. SC questioned what practical steps can be taken on this, and overloading.

Members discussed the frequency, implications and practical solutions to the issue of overloading; information collected after haulage operations can suggest that up to 20% of lorries are over 44.5 tonnes with 10% over 45 tonnes. LG/WA explained that on-board weighing systems are not infallible and that weighbridges at sawmills are a more accurate way of measuring the load.

In terms of practical solutions, WA explained the system that has been adopted on Seafeld Estate. The Estate monitors loads on a weekly returns basis and, having reached a 10% frequency of overloading several years ago, now issue advisories (yellow card) for anything over 44.3t and warnings (red card) for those over 44.5t. Any more than 3 red cards in a 4-week period results in a 1 week ban for the wagon/driver depending on whether it's double shifted. Since the introduction of this policy, they have only had 2 bans and evidence would suggest that flagging up by yellow carding seems to have focused the mind and may help in pre-empting issues with errors developing in an individual wagon's weighing system. In a period over last winter, the Estate moved over 7,000 tonnes (circa 280 lorry loads) with no lorry over 44.3t. Since April, they have again moved in excess of 7,000 tonnes, had 5 loads over 44.3t and 6 over 44.5t, three of the latter from one vehicle which resulted in their second ever ban.

CG reported that having sought comments from other timber transport group representatives, the UKFPA and RHA, she has been advised that Confor's Technical Committee request information on any reported incidents and discuss this during the annual joint UKFPA/Confor/FES liaison meeting, at which stats are reviewed and any measures considered.

The RHA confirmed that they are currently working with Transport Scotland who are conducting an industry-wide study in overweight vehicles on the trunk road network to assess the scale of any problem. Whilst they are not yet sure when any information will be made available by Transport Scotland, they are happy to work with industry partners to consider any required action/implementation.

5.2 Timber haulage survey

CG updated members on the proposed timber haulage survey to be undertaken on behalf of the Timber Transport Forum, the aim of which is to get a better idea of the availability of the types of roundwood timber vehicles available, particularly those suited to weaker rural and forest roads. A short questionnaire has been drafted with the questions relating solely to softwood timber transport. CG to circulate a copy of the questionnaire to members for their information.

5.3 James Jones on the big screen

CG advised members that following discussions with the Scottish Government Rural Matters team, a [short video](#) (3:48 mins) has been launched which highlights the use of minor rural roads by the freight industry. Filmed on location at Kinloch Rannoch, the video has been produced to raise awareness of the issues surrounding rural freight transport and the need to support investment in the rural road network. Members watched the video and were encouraged to circulate to local councillors/MSPs etc.. An [abbreviated version](#) (2:12 mins) is also available.

6. Forest road accesses

CG advised members of a project being considered by the TTF which would review existing guidance on forest exits and assess a range of forest exits and consider issues arising. It would be intended that the work could result in an STTS project proposal to carry out improvements on a number of sites and to present the work as completed case studies. The scope of any STTS project proposal would depend on the availability of partner funding and meeting the criteria of the scheme.

Members discussed the current variation in specifications for forest accesses across different Local Authorities and how a pragmatic and proportionate approach is needed. Members advised that consideration would need to be given to the definition of any works to be undertaken and the requirements of the STTS/Prior Notification (e.g. maintenance of forest accesses wouldn't require Prior Notification but wouldn't be eligible for STTS support; improving forest accesses would be eligible for STTS funding but would also require Prior Notification) and that care would need to be taken so as not to raise expectations that this sort of work could be supported through STTS funding.

IC confirmed that Moray Council have a forest access specification available for use in the study (DM advised that Aberdeenshire Council use the same specification). ICo highlighted that for woodlands under 50Ha, funding could be available via the [Forestry Grant Scheme Infrastructure Grant](#) to provide support for new access infrastructure (e.g. construction of bell-mouth junctions, forest roads and laybys/turning areas/loading bays).

CG to discuss implications of STTS eligibility/Prior Notification requirements with Roland.

7. GTTG members updates

7.1 Round table updates and topical discussion

7.1.1 A96 dualling project

CG advised members that she was scheduled to speak with AECOM to discuss industry's comments regarding the A96 dualling programme and that a record of this conversation could be used as part of the development of a business case. Members therefore highlighted the following key points for CG to convey: -

- Delays in journey times/access to forests during the construction phase is short-term compared to much long-lasting impacts resulting from final road/junction layout etc.;
- The industry requires access onto the new road without too many additional miles;
- Any additional miles could well be along minor, rural, roads which could then be impacted by an increase in use by timber lorries;
- When re-routing lorries onto the new road, they shouldn't be directed into urban areas;
- Access to fuel stops and other facilities is important; as too is the location of laybys;
- Availability of the old A96 would be useful once dualling is complete (IC/DM advised that the old A96 would most likely become the responsibility of Local Authorities to maintain).

AN suggested that the potential route maps were not particularly easy to find. ICo mentioned that there have been a series of public consultation meetings at which hard copy maps are displayed and that the [Community Engagement](#) web pages on the Transport Scotland A96 Dualling Programme website provide access to the materials used at the meetings. ICo also highlighted that 3 consultation meetings for the [Huntly to Aberdeen](#) section had been held last week and that he would provide CG with contact details so that the GTTG to get in touch.

7.1.2 Timber Transport Forum update

CG referred members to the TTF update provided by Roland and confirmed that a copy would be circulated with the minutes.

7.1.3 Timber Transport Forum conference

CG advised that the [Timber Transport Forum conference](#) is being held on Friday 23 March 2018 at Drumossie Hotel on the outskirts of Inverness. The conference programme is currently being finalised and will hopefully include a site visit/dinner for those able to travel up on the Thursday.

7.1.4 Forestry and Land Management (Scotland) Bill

WA updated members of the progress of the Bill through its parliamentary stages and highlighted that industry has a direct opportunity to engage in its development.

7.1.5 Other GTTG member updates

Agreed Routes Maps: Members highlighted that with more than one ARM website noted, it is difficult to know which is the most up-to-date version and therefore requested that just one, more visible, link be promoted on the TTF website. CG to discuss the current [ARM web page](#) with RS and update accordingly.

Roadside services: Members discussed the location of utilities/other services adjacent to public roads and debated how these can be of concerns to hauliers. DM advised that utility companies have a right to access public road verges to install apparatus. IC highlighted that Local Authorities can also have difficulties with such services as, for example, once a gas pipe has been installed under a road, you can't dig within 3m of it (for road repairs and maintenance etc.).

8. Date of next meeting/s

Wednesday 14 March 2018, 14:00 – 16:30 at FCS Grampian Conservancy, Huntly AB54 4SJ