



Minutes for GTTG meeting

Date: 14 July 2016

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

Present:

Will Anderson (Chair)

Ian Cameron – Moray Council (IC)

Steve Conolly – Cawdor Forestry (SC)

Neil Crookston – Scottish Woodlands (NC)

Cameron Gillies – Euroforest (CGi)

Claire Glaister – GTTG Project Officer (CG)

Lee Grigor – James Jones & Sons (LG)

Andrew Nicol – DWP (AN)

Ralph Singleton – Aberdeenshire Council (RSi)

Roland Stiven – Timber Transport Forum (RS)

Frank Tomlinson – Tilhill (FT)

Apologies

Ian Cowe – Forestry Commission Scotland

Iain Mackenzie – James Jones & Sons

Derek Murray – Aberdeenshire Council

Derek Nelson – Forestry Commission Scotland

James Nott – Forestry Commission Scotland

Alastair Young – Forestry Commission Scotland

Agenda Item	Action	Appointed person/s
3. (28/08/14)	Make contact with “missing information” agents on SCOTS project	CG
4. (20/11/14)	Liaise with FCS to review Forest Plans to fill gaps in SCOTS project data	CG
4. (20/11/14)	Submit timber forecasting information to CG	NC
7. (20/11/14)	Submit comments on driver shortages to the Road Haulage Association	Industry/CC
4. (23/03/15)	Members to continue to put forward STTS proposals using pre-proposal form	All
3. (16/07/15)	Provide NFI data to Jacobs	CG
3. (16/07/15)	Use the Timber Transport Mapping tool to highlight how much timber has been forecast to use the A96 and advise Jacobs accordingly	CG
3. (16/07/15)	Identify exit points within a set corridor of current route options and encourage land owners to make contact with Transport Scotland	CG
5. (16/07/15)	Update ARM website to show relevant B roads as Agreed Routes	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
7. (17/03/16)	Highlight northern section of Suie Road in yellow (Consultation Route) on ARM website	RS/GAIST
7. (17/03/16)	IC to provide C13E traffic count results to CG for circulation to GTTG	IC/CG
7. (17/03/16)	GTTG to discuss/agree requested change to ARM classification of U144H	All
3.	Consider potential STTS bids for submission by 30 September into rolling programme	All
6.	Pull together events programme for discussion with members	CG/LAs
7.	Investigate planning restrictions on timber lorries travelling through Archiestown to the CHP plant at Aberlour	CG
7.	Investigate feasibility of Suie Hill road STTS bid with colleagues and GTTG	RSi/CG

1. Welcome, introductions and apologies

WA welcomed all those present and invited members to provide a brief introduction. 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 17 March 2016 & matters arising

Minutes of the last meeting were confirmed as correct (subsequent to clarification with IC re previously reported value of The Moray Council budget for forestry roads). Action table below has been amended to reflect current status (those now completed have been shaded); carried forward actions added to current action table.

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4. (20/11/14)	Submit timber forecasting information to CG	NC
7. (20/11/14)	Submit comments on driver shortages to the Road Haulage Association	Industry/CC
7. (20/11/14)	Circulate Scottish Water guidance on forestry operations to GTTG members for comment	CG/All
3. (23/03/15)	Enhance links between ARM and TTF websites	RS
4. (23/03/15)	Members to continue to put forward STTS proposals using pre-proposal form	All
3. (16/07/15)	Provide NFI data to Jacobs	CG
3. (16/07/15)	Use the Timber Transport Mapping tool to highlight how much timber has been forecast to use the A96 and advise Jacobs accordingly	CG
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5. (16/07/15)	Update ARM website to show relevant B roads as Agreed Routes	CG
3. (19/11/15)	Provide shape files for SCOTS exit points and ARMs to aid LA review of ARMs	CG/LAs
5. (19/11/15)	Contact individual partners to seek funding commitment	ICo
7. (19/11/15)	Confirm minimum tonnage thresholds for consultation on felling licences at meeting with FCS	IC/DM
3.	CG to liaise with Ralph Singleton to arrange final inspection of B976/B9158 STTS project	CG/RS
3.	Members to complete and return their Letters of Support for the STTS application	All
3.	DM to consider additional STTS bids with colleagues	DM
5.	Circulate FCS Managing woodland access and forest operations in Scotland video to members	CG
5.	CG to check LA contact details on GTTG web pages are up-to-date	CG
5.	CG to add JR onto S&TTTG contacts list	CG
6.	CG to ask Confor what response/s were submitted for the Prior Notification review	CG
7.	Highlight northern section of Suie Road in yellow (Consultation Route) on ARM website	RS/GAIST
7.	CG to forward C43M communication to DM for discussion within the Council	CG/DM
7.	IC to provide C13E traffic count results to CG for circulation to GTTG	IC/CG
7.	GTTG to discuss/agree requested change to ARM classification of U144H	All
7.	CG to investigate axle and laden weights of stone lorries	CG

▪ Circulate & comment on Scottish Water Forestry Operations Guidance

Scottish Water’s (SW) Forestry Operations Guidance had been circulated to GTTG members in advance of the meeting and comments invited. CG summarised feedback from S&TTTG members who had asked if there were any maps showing location of SW assets (CG advised that SW had previously informed the group that such a map is not publically available, for security purposes), that SW charge £50.00 to produce a site specific map but that it did not guarantee locations and that SW were either slow to come out to meet up on site or don’t provide sufficient information to plan operations accordingly.

Following circulation of the information, CG advised members that the FCS Land Use and Climate Change Policy Team had been sent the document and would be providing feedback to SW directly. Members were happy that all comments were fed back to SW via the FCS Policy Team.

- **Ask Confor what response/s were submitted for the Prior Notification review**

The [Review of Prior Notification Approval Procedures for Agricultural and Forestry Private Ways](#) had been circulated in advance of the meeting for information. CG also informed members that, in advance of the report's publication, Confor had written to Kevin Stewart and Fergus Ewing requesting that forestry be taken out of the system and would be writing to them again with a targeted response to the report.

- **Highlight northern section of Suie Road in yellow (Consultation Route) on ARM website**

CGi asked why the northern section of the Suie Road was a Consultation Route when the lower section was an Agreed Route; RSi/RS confirmed that STTS funding had previously been awarded for work on the southern stretch of the road in order for it to carry timber transport more sustainably. CGi highlighted that this had not been stated in a recent standing sale and suggested that such information be included on future contracts.

- **CG to investigate axle and laden weight of stone lorries**

CG confirmed that she had been provided with the following information with regard to stone lorry axle weights (for a standard "8 wheeler" (most often used for transporting quarried materials)): -

Gross weight: Currently 32 tonnes legal maximum (modern vehicles are often plated for 36 tonnes

Tare weight: 12 tonnes

Net weight: 20 tonnes per load

Axle weights: 10/10/8/8 (front to back)

3. Strategic Timber Transport Scheme update and GTTG projects

3.1 Update on STTS 2016 bidding round

RS confirmed that in the last bidding round, 20 bids had been submitted (15 infrastructure projects and 5 Project Officer posts) and which 8-9 were progressing. RS advised that at least £650,000 remained uncommitted for spending before end of February 2017 and that the scheme would therefore be opened for additional proposals and operated as a rolling programme; until 30 September 2016; bids which met the social/community criteria of the scheme would be accepted for assessment as soon as they were ready and had all the relevant support/permissions were in place and then assessed on a first-come-first-served.

RS also advised that representatives of the Timber Transport Forum would be meeting with Fergus Ewing to discuss the future of the scheme.

With reference to the additional STTS budgets, IC highlighted that The Moray Council are currently carrying out some work on forestry roads but that as this was already underway, it wouldn't be eligible for STTS support. RSi confirmed that match funding from Aberdeenshire Council would be difficult to secure but will consider potential bids with colleagues. WA encouraged members to consider potential bids as we wouldn't want to see budgets being lost.

RS confirmed that the importance of a longer term scheme which would give time for proposals to be properly considered and match funded would be stressed to Mr Ewing.

3.2 GTTG – Regional Timber Transport Project Officer

WA/CG confirmed that earlier challenges with the procurement of the Project Officer post had been overcome and that a contract would now be in place until the end of January 2017, subject to match funding being confirmed. CG updated members on recent RTTPO meeting at which potential options for seeking PO funding via a more national pot rather than at individual group level was discussed and GTTG members confirmed that as it was working at present, they were happy to continue. RS advised that each RTTG operates independently and that whilst there is sometimes discussion about a national funding pot, none have specifically requested this option be investigated further at this stage.

3.3 Moray Council – Forestry Roads Programme 2016

IC reported that the work on 3 roads (C13E, C25E & U105E) has been contracted and is now underway on the U105E (road recycling) and scheduled to take place in September on the C13E and C25E (edge strengthening).

IC also highlighted that he hoped that the £250,000 forestry roads budget would be an annual budget but that this could not be guaranteed.

WA thanked IC for the work he had done to secure this level of investment for the road network which is critical to the forest and timber industries; particularly during a time of well publicised cuts to budgets.

3.4 Aberdeenshire Council – Coynachie Road

RSi advised that the ecologist's report had now been received and had confirmed that it would be acceptable to exclude the badgers from the sett as there was a satellite sett nearby. Aberdeenshire Council have forwarded the report to SNH to consideration and licence issue.

4. Agreed Routes Map

4.1 Programmes for Revisions and Updating

RS confirmed that the current ARM website hosting has been procured for the next 18 months and that 3 updates received from the GTTG were pending.

CG reminded members of the query that had been raised that the previous GTTG meeting (17 March 2016) - why Agreed Routes weren't coloured green on the ARM website, rather than red, as red could give the impression the road was a no-go route for timber lorries. RS advised that this issue had been raised previously (including before his time as TTF PO) and felt it would have been because the colour contrast when overlaid on OS data didn't give sufficient clarity as to which routes were green. Whatever approach was taken, CGi requested that there be consistency across RTTG boundaries and SC highlighted that RTTG seems to approach it as all roads are Consultation Routes and shown as such on the ARM website. RS suggested that it may be useful for AN Other to undertake a review of all RTTG ARMs so that inconsistencies could be highlighted and addressed, as appropriate.

RSi suggested that if C and U-class roads are neither Agreed nor Consultation Routes, they should be marked up as Excluded Routes. WA advised that the current system – C and U-class roads are Consultation Routes unless otherwise indicated – should be retained as it provides a level of flexibility, should a different route be necessary. RS suggested that inappropriate routes could be classified as Excluded Routes to highlight that they should not be used for timber haulage. SC highlighted that industry should be seeming to minimise damage on the public road network and shouldn't therefore taking shortcuts. CGi suggested that this situation should be specified in timber sales/haulage contracts so everyone is clear. RSi confirmed that he had been under the impression that if C and U-class roads didn't carry any ARM route classification, they were, by default, prohibited routes from timber transport. WA confirmed that this wasn't the case and that C and U-class roads were Consultation Routes unless otherwise indicated. WA also advised that if there were any concerns regarding a route, whether from the Local Authority or industry's point of view, then these should be brought to the GTTG for discussion.

IC highlighted some roads around Hill of Maud/Deskford and asked if some of these routes should be specifically marked as timber transport routes. WA advised that timber transport routes should be specified in contracts and information passed to the haulier by the seller. RS suggested that there are issues with getting such information to those on the ground and that IT systems, such as NavMan, may help address these. WA highlighted that whilst you can tell people to use certain routes, there will always be the human factor whereby a minority won't choose to do so.

LG asked if any other sectors followed the same sort of ARM system; members weren't aware that any did.

5. Good Practice and industry updates

5.1 Phytosanitary Precautions

RS advised members that the FC Tree Health Advisor would be presenting to the Timber Transport Forum and would report back to the Group thereafter. LG highlighted potential impact on phytosanitary precautions of the Working @ Height Regs - open trainers allow drivers to sweep bark away without climbing up on the bunks whereas closed trailers require drivers to climb into the trailer to sweep out. RSi advised that Aberdeenshire Council are considering use of walking floors to address similar issues but that these might affect Gross Vehicle Weights.

5.2 A96 dualling programme update

No update to report

5.3 FISA

CG confirmed that the [FISA Forest Haulage Safety Manual](#) has now been launched and encouraged members to forward to relevant contacts.

6. Promoting the Regional Timber Transport Groups

6.1 FCS Woodland Officer meetings

CG updated members on her recent attendance at a meeting of Woodland Officers from the Perth & Argyll Conservancy and confirmed that meetings with FCS Central Conservancy and Scottish Lowlands FD had been requested.

6.2 Liaison with Local Authorities/6.3 Local events

RS highlighted that the development of Local Authority forest and woodlands strategies provided the industry with an opportunity to promote the importance of forestry in general and timber transport in particular, to local Councillors. SC suggested that the industry should be pre-emptive and look for opportunities for positive engagement (e.g. local events) which showcase the industry. RSi discussed a similar situation when the Lecht road had been closed for roadworks and an on-site visit had helped improve understanding amongst key stakeholders. LG confirmed that should any events be organised, James Jones & Sons would be happy to make a lorry available. AN also highlighted that events such as the forestry open days at Aboyne Academy may also provide useful opportunities to promote timber transport. CG asked to pull together a programme of events in conjunction with LA members for discussion with GTTG members.

6.4 Other/s

CG advised members that one of her RTTG Project Officer colleagues had delivered a couple of short training sessions to harvesting managers as part of their annual H&S/company meetings. Running through a series of different scenarios, the workshop raised awareness of good practice in the management of timber transport and sources of information, advice and guidance that are available. CG invited members to ask if they would like to hold similar events for their own staff/colleagues.

RS highlighted that the Timber Transport Forum would be attending the APF at Ragley Hall in September.

7. GTTG members updates

7.1 Round table updates and topical discussion

FT highlighted a possible anomaly in the planning conditions for the CHP biomass plant at Aberlour which stated that no timber haulage was permitted through Archiestown when the road is classified as an Agreed Route. CG to investigate further.

RSi asked how the road closure notification system was working; CG highlighted that it resulted in a high volume of daily emails but members were keen for CG to continue to filter these, highlighting those effecting timber haulage directly to the group.

IC asked if there has been any indicated of future STTS funding; RS advised that he and other representatives of the TTF will be meeting with Fergus Ewing and that he has also made contact with the Minister for Transport and Islands, Humza Yousaf.

RSi referred members back to the northern section of Suie Hill road and suggested that this could be a candidate for an STTS-supported passing place project, thus facilitating timber traffic traveling north from the forestry blocks along the road. Members discussed the benefits that could be delivered to timber hauliers and the local community should timber lorries be directed along this shorter route and were happy to support a STTS application submission. RSi to consider match funding opportunities with colleagues and a draft bid with CG.

8. Date of next meeting/s

Thursdays 17 November 2016 and 16 March 2017; venues to be confirmed