



Minutes for GTTG meeting

Date: 17 March 2016

Location: Castle Hotel, Portsoy Road, Huntly AB54 4SH

Present:

Will Anderson (Chair)

Ian Cameron – Moray Council (IC)

Euan Christie – Scottish Woodlands (EC)

Neil Crookston – Scottish Woodlands (NC)

Ian Cowe – Forestry Commission Scotland (ICo)

Claire Glaister – GTTG Project Officer (CG)

Ben Hazel – Tilhill Forestry (BH)

Derek Murray – Aberdeenshire Council (DM)

Jonathan Ritchie – James Jones & Sons Ltd (JR)

Apologies:

Cameron Gillies – Euroforest

Derek Nelson – Forestry Commission Scotland

Andrew Nicol – RTS Ltd

Roland Stiven – Timber Transport Forum

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
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
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
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

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 19 November 2015 & matters arising

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.

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4. (20/11/14)	Submit timber forecasting information to CG	NC
7. (20/11/14)	Circulate Timber Transport Management Protocols to GTTG members and wider agent network	CG
7. (20/11/14)	Submit comments on driver shortages to the Road Haulage Association	Industry/CC
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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.	Provide shape files for SCOTS exit points and ARMs to aid LA review of ARMs	CG/LAs
3.	Summarise previous discussions on C13E and circulate to members for review	CG
3.	Add CG’s name to circulation list for road notifications in Aberdeenshire	RSi/DM
4.	Submit STTS funding requirements for B976/B9158 project	RSi
4.	Highlight potential STTS projects to CG	All
5.	Contact individual partners to seek funding commitment	ICo
5.	Confirm value and timing of payment for ARM hosting contribution	RSt
6.	Request copy of Think Safe, Be Safe guide from FISA and circulate to GTTG members a.s.a.p.	CG
6.	If provided, submit comments on the FISA guide as soon as possible	All
6.	Update FISA-type guide to managing timber transport and circulate for final comment	CG
6..	Submit final comment on FISA-type guide to managing timber transport	All
7.	Confirm minimum tonnage thresholds for consultation on felling licences at meeting with FCS	IC/DM

3. Strategic Timber Transport Scheme projects

3.1 Moray Council Pre-emptive Drainage Programme 2015

IC reported that all the work to be undertaken on the 2015 Pre-emptive Drainage Programme has been completed, inspected and approved and that the claim for STTS funding had been submitted and paid.

3.2 Aberdeenshire Council B976/B9158 Burnroot to Dinnet Drainage & Edge Strengthening

DM reported that the work along the B796 and B9158 has been completed and due to additional works being required, the Council secured some additional STTS funding. CG confirmed that she had been authorised to carry out the final inspection and will liaise with Ralph Singleton re date/s.

James Jones & Sons have commented that they were impressed with the difference that the drainage works have made to the road.

ICo highlighted the success of the GTTG's partnership approach to STTS bids where the industry works with the Local Authorities to prioritise where work should be done.

NC asked if future bids could include similar work on Consultation Routes. CG advised that whilst there was no reason why they couldn't be included on Local Authority-led STTS bids, they would need to be part of a wider bid which included strategic (i.e. Agreed) routes.

3.3 New for 2016/17

3.3.1 Regional Timber Transport Project Officer

ICo confirmed that letters seeking match funding had been issued, together with a Summary of Outputs and a Letter of Support template. ICo requested that members submit their Letters of Support as soon as possible so that these can be added to the STTS application.

ICo highlighted that GTTG (and S&TTTG) members fund more than 50% of the Project Officer post; funding which is very much appreciated. ICo also noted however that as there are now a few more members across the two groups, FCS would be reviewing the level of contributions to ensure that a consistency of approach was applied.

DM asked if ICo would invoice all contributors once the application was submitted. ICo confirmed that invoices would be issued in the next financial year.

ICo confirmed that there would be a break in service before any new contract commenced and that a tendering exercise would need to be undertaken for the role. The contract would be for a further 12 months (to tie in with the STTS funding round) and be in place from mid-April-beginning of May.

ICo and CG advised members that as there was now a limited number of days remaining of the current contract, CG's time would need to be prioritised to assist with STTS applications.

3.3.2 Aberdeenshire Council - Coynachie Road

DM reported that, as previously discussed, a bid was being considered for a road serving the Clashindarroch Forest. The road (U76S) was one of three Agreed Routes serving the forest complex and was being undermined by a large badger sett.

DM advised that the Council are currently awaiting an environmental report which will recommend what work is required and when this could take place and that a Council Committee meeting is due to take place on 28 March 2016 at which potential match funding for the project will be discussed; should STTS funding not be secured, DM highlighted that the work would be unlikely to go ahead with the result that timber haulage restrictions along this road would need to be considered.

JR reported that lorries sometimes operate a one-way system along the roads in the Clash Forest to assist with the management of health and safety and to reduce disruption and so would be keen to see the works completed so as not to reduce the routing options into/out of this large forest resource.

3.3.3 Moray Council – Pre-emptive Drainage Programme 2016

IC highlighted that a report on the economic contribution of forestry in Moray had been submitted to the Moray Council Infrastructure Committee and with it, a request for £500,000 for work on forestry roads (a Committee decision is due to be taken on 31 March 2016).

IC also reported that preparations were underway for another STTS bid on a number of key routes within Moray – for example, TMC have identified £200,000 of edge strengthening works that could be undertaken on the C13E. JR and BH confirmed that this road carries a lot of timber traffic and that they would support such works.

IC asked if requesting £200,000 for one road was too much and ICo suggested they submit a bid for the full amount as the STTS assessment panel could either reject in full, approve in full or partially approve. ICo also advised that the panel would be looking for projects that were deliverable and given TMC's previous history of delivering projects on time, should be considered a "safe pair of hands".

WA expressed thanks to IC for requesting a specific £500,000 budget for forestry roads and also advised that even if a further STTS bid wasn't successful on this occasion, the application would be useful to help justify future funding.

DM asked if drainage was a specific criteria of the STTS. CG confirmed that drainage wasn't a specific criteria but that bids had to have demonstrable social, environmental and community benefit.

DM advised that he would discuss other potential roads in Aberdeenshire with a view to consider another STTS bid.

4. Priority work areas for Timber Transport Project officer

WA invited members to highlight any work areas they would wish to see prioritised over the new 12 months; members suggested continuing with the current priorities, providing assistance with the emerging requirement for TTMPs (particularly in S&TTTG) and the collation/circulation of road closure information.

DM advised that websites are available which show road closure information but JR and BH confirmed it was really useful to have a heads up on those closures which would have a greater impact on forestry operations.

ICo confirmed that for the remainder of the current contract, the focus would need to be on STTS bids and TTMPs and that the other priorities could continue in the next contract.

5. Managing timber on public roads

5.1 Report on the Timber Transport Forum National Conference

IC, DM, JR & CG provided an update on the TTF Conference which focused on community engagement.

The Conference was well attended with 120 delegates and presentations included good practice in community engagement, sharing resources, the new roadside stacking and loading publication, [Loading Timber from Roadside Forests](#), and forestry safety.

Copies of the presentations are available in the [Knowledge Base - Conferences web page](#) of the [Timber Transport Forum](#) website.

It was felt that the conference was very useful, highlighted positive steps to encourage engagement and provided examples of the different options to consider for shared road access – e.g. use local contractors, agree on-going road maintenance responsibilities between the relevant parties and ensure good liaison with industry.

IC explained that options for shared access were of particular relevance to Moray Council as they have had situations where 2 windfarms have had exclusive use of 2 individual roads whereas they could/should have considered shared access and only constructed one road.

IC and DM were surprised at the feedback from FISA, particularly the high level of fatalities in the industry.

In terms of community engagement, JR explained that James Jones & Sons have regular health, safety and awareness days for their drivers and simple things – like thanking other road users when they pull over to let timber lorries pass – can make a big difference.

A discussion around convoying of lorries followed with IC saying it wasn't so much the number of lorries that travel along a road at any one time but the number of axles and that ROADEX recommend 30 minutes between each lorry. A previous Timber Transport Forum campaign had promoted "Wait a minute" and JR highlighted that sometimes, the landowner may request a more frequent level of haulage and that a degree of convoying is inevitable; particularly if there are no/insufficient passing places.

WA suggested that the frequency of lorries should be determined on a road-by-road basis and would be dependent on the ARM classification of the road. In terms of community engagement, WA commented that letter drops to residents along affected routes was one option; CG highlighted that the [Timber Transport Management Protocols](#) recommend liaising with the local Community Council, although NC advised that not all Community Councils are as effective as others. All agreed that signage prior to the operations was useful but recognised that signs were not always read. JR commented that James Jones and Sons shift 600,000 tonnes of timber per year and receive a very low level of complaints.

In light of the discussions at the Conference, the need to review the Timber Transport Management Protocols was discussed and whilst members agreed that they did not need to be revised at this stage, they requested that the FCS video – [Managing woodland access and forest operations in Scotland](#) – be circulated, for information (see also associated [FCS Practice Note 104 Managing woodland access and forest operations in Scotland](#))

ICo suggested that Forest Plans could include the requirement to identify haulage routes to be used and how haulage operations would be managed. ICo also advised that new Forest Plan guidance was being developed which would include a greater focus on community engagement. WA stressed that a pragmatic approach was needed.

DM asked if some Agreed Routes should be re-classified as Consultation Routes to encourage liaison with the Local Authority. WA advised that the ARM classifications were primarily based on the strategic nature of the road but that they were subject to on-going review. WA suggested that concerns regarding on-going maintenance of Agreed Routes should be raised with the Timber Transport Forum again.

5.2 Communicating with stakeholders

CG raised an issue that had been discussed at the previous day's S&TTTG meeting in which concern had been expressed as to the ease of finding out about road closures/diversions following the Christmas/New Year flooding and contacting Local Authority road representatives.

S&TTTG members had recognised that the 2015 winter weather had resulted in a one off (hopefully!) situation and that generic contact details for Local Authorities were available; CG highlighted that these can be found on the [Local Contact](#) page of the S&TTTG website under **Roads maintenance contacts** but that she would check that these were up-to-date, amended, if required.

Contact details for the GTTG area can be found [HERE](#).

S&TTTG members had agreed that should similar circumstances arise again, forest managers should liaise with the Timber Transport Project Officer and/or contact the Local Authority representative on the S&TTTG directly.

GTTG members agreed likewise.

JR requested that he be added to the S&TTTG circulation list.

5.3 A96 dualling project update

CG advised that there was nothing new to report at this stage.

6. Good Practice and industry updates

6.1 FISA-type guide for managing timber transport

CG had circulated the approved document prior to the meeting and invited members to forward to anyone they felt would be interested in the short guide. The document, [A Guide to Managing Timber Transport 2016](#), can be downloaded from the [GTTG Local Guidance](#) web page.

JR reminded members that where banksmen are needed, they must be trained, and cited a recent death and resulting fine where this had not been the case.

6.2 Roadside Stacking & loading publication

Covered under **5.1 Report on the Timber Transport Forum National Conference** above

6.3 Prior Notification

WA advised members that the Scottish Government were reviewing Prior Notification arrangements and it was hoped that following a current consultation exercise, forestry would be removed from the Regulation.

ICo confirmed that FCS are in discussion with Aberdeenshire and Moray Councils in order to discuss internal arrangements and develop an agreed process for handling applications – possibly via the EIA process – but that arrangements had yet to be formalised. NC advised that using the EIA process would only work if you had reached the EIA determination threshold.

FCS have produced guidance for use by FCS staff - see [Briefing Note 3 - Prior Notification of forestry tracks/private ways – November 2015](#) – and the Scottish Government have commissioned a review of the Statutory Instrument which resulted in the Regulation, the closing date for which had been 1 February 2016 (see Stakeholder Questionnaire attached). CG was asked to find out what feedback had been submitted by Confor so that this could be reported back to the group.

DM asked about other, non-PN, consultation arrangements, following the previous review to discuss wider consultation mechanisms. ICo advised that a meeting with Aberdeenshire Council is still to be held.

7. GTTG members updates

7.1 Updates from GTTG members

DM highlighted two Consultation Routes – the Suie Hill road (Tullynessle to Clatt) and C43M (Muir of Fowlis - Tough) – advising that the northern section of the Suie Road (from the view point up to the Clatt road) seems to be being treated as an Agreed Route, although it only carries a Consultation Route classification. CG suggested that the ARM website be updated to show this as a yellow, thus highlighting its Consultation Route status.

In terms of the C43M, DM advised that lorries have been reported along this route. CG reported that this road had been the subject of a previous STTS proposal in which work would have been undertaken such that it could become an Agreed Route, thus diverting timber traffic away from Alford. Following a meeting between Aberdeenshire Council and local residents however, residents firmly rejected the STTS proposals and no work was undertaken. CG to forward previous correspondence to DM for further discussion within the Council.

IC advised members that a traffic count along the C13E had been set up and would be an on-going survey. Figures for May and Oct were being collected and would be circulated to the GTTG for information. IC asked however if the industry could try to discourage drivers from using the U144H cut through to the B9102 and instead, direct traffic further down the C13E so that it joins the B9102 at Upper Knockando. It was noted however that as the U144H is currently classified as an Agreed Route, members should discuss its ARM status at a future meeting so that any required changes can be discussed/agreed.

IC highlighted that damage to roads is being caused by quarry lorries bringing in stone for in-forest road construction and asked if these fell under the same ARM system as timber lorries. Members advised that they do not currently fall under the Agreed Routes system. CG to investigate axle and laden weights of stone lorries so that the group can review and discuss further at a future meeting.

8. Date of future meeting/s

Thursday 14 July 2016; FCS Grampian Conservancy, Huntly