



Minutes for GTTG meeting

Date: 23 March 2015

Location: FCS Grampian Conservancy, Huntly

Present:

Will Anderson (Chair)

Ian Cameron – Moray Council (IC)

Cameron Gillies – Euroforest (CaG)

Claire Glaister – GTTG Project Officer (CG)

Lee Grigor – James Jones & Sons Ltd (LG)

David Hay - Forestry Commission Scotland (DH)

Frank Tomlinson – UPM (FT)

Andrew Nicol – DWP (AN)

Alastair Young – FES (AY)

Apologies:

Alasdair Cameron – UPM Tilhill

Neil Crookston – Scottish Woodlands

Stuart MacFarlane – Aberdeenshire Council

Derek Nelson – Forestry Commission Scotland

Roland Stiven – Timber Transport Forum

Agenda Item	Action	Appointed person/s
4. (13/11/13)	Draft information flyer for dissemination to forest managers/agents	CG
4. (13/11/13)	Approve content of flyer and dissemination methods	GTTG
6. (20/03/14)	Prepare and circulate draft Good Practice leaflet for comments	CG
6. (20/03/14)	Approve Good Practice leaflet for circulate	GTTG members
3. (28/08/14)	Make contact with “missing information” agents on SCOTS project	CG
3. (20/11/14)	Aberdeenshire Council to liaise with James Jones and other land owners to discuss preferred timings for drainage and edge strengthening works along B976 & B9158	SMcF
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)	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
7. (20/11/14)	Circulate Scottish Water guidance on forestry operations to GTTG members for comment	CG/All
3.	CaG to provide details of Highland Council consultation requirements to CG	CaG/CG
3.	CG to clarify timber thresholds and prepare FISA-type checklist for comment	CG
3.	Members to comment on/approve checklist for timber haulage/consultation	All
3.	Enhance links between ARM and TTF websites	RS
3.	Circulate Jon Ritchie’s report/s on CTi to members	CG
3.	All members to contribute to review of FES CAT AR assessment	All
4.	Members to continue to put forward STTS proposals using pre-proposal form	All
7.	CG to ask Local Authorities to provide prior notification of road closures on Agreed Routes	CG/LAs
7.	CG to check status of interactive road closures map with Aberdeenshire Council	CG
7.	IC to check road closures website for road permit/planned road closure overlap	IC
7.	CaG to provide information on Highland Council’s risk assessment requirement to CG for discussion with HTTG	CaG/CG
7.	Add SEPA to list of GTTG members	CG

1. Welcome, introductions and apologies

WA welcomed all those present, particularly FT who was attending his first GTTG, deputising for Alasdair Cameron (UPM). WA confirmed that a number of apologies had been received and that these would be added to the minutes.

2. Notes of last meeting on 20 November 2014 & 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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3. (28/08/14)	Make contact with “missing information” agents on SCOTS project	CG
3.	Aberdeenshire Council to liaise with James Jones and other land owners to discuss preferred timings for drainage and edge strengthening works along B976 & B9158	SMcF
3.	Submit proposed specifications of STTS signage to be erected during/after the works to FCS	ICa/SMcF
4.	Liaise with FCS to review Forest Plans to fill gaps in SCOTS project data	CG
4.	Provide SCOTS GTTG map to NC	CG
4.	Submit timber forecasting information to CG	NC
4.	Confirm availability of road condition survey data as a mapping layer and discuss options for including as a SCOTS mapping layer	CG/RS
5.	Circulate website comment form to all RTTG members	RS/CG
5.	Provide feedback on format/content for new TTF website	All
6.	Liaise with Jonathan Ritchie to discuss potential GTTG links on CPC days	CG
7.	Circulate Timber Transport Management Protocols to GTTG members and wider agent network	CG
7.	Submit comments on driver shortages to the Road Haulage Association	Industry/CC
7.	Submit comments on ferry fares to the Road Haulage Association	All
7.	Circulate Scottish Water guidance on forestry operations to GTTG members for comment	CG/All
7.	Respond to FOI request	CG
8.	Note dates for 2015 GTTG meetings in diaries	All

3. ARMs and other good practice

3.1 Consultation Routes

CG advised members that there has been a rise in the number of instances where timber haulage has taken place on a Consultation Route where no consultation with the Local Authority appears to have taken place prior to haulage commencing. She reminded members of the steps included in the [Timber Transport Management Protocols](#) which set out what consultation should be undertaken and when and asked what additional information could be made available to try to encourage better compliance – e.g. marking up all Consultation Routes on the ARM website/including a caveat on the ARM website.

Members discussed the potential confusion caused by some Consultation Routes being shown as such on the ARM whereas others are not and that whilst the [Introduction to Agreed Routes](#) webpage contains the statement “B roads and minor roads are classified as Consultation Routes unless covered by one of the other TTG classifications”, this is not shown on the actual ARMs.

WA and AN highlighted that under the original GTTG ARMs, all A and B routes were classified as Agreed unless covered by one of the other TTG classifications and noted that this arrangement appears to have been updated to now include all B roads under the “Consultation Route rule”.

Members discussed various options to provide clarity on the ARMs. CG explained that marking up all Consultation Routes on the ARM website would make the maps overcomplicated and increase the size of the underlying files significantly, thereby reducing the efficiency/speed of the site but that the S&TTG have requested that the ARM site includes a pop-up stating how roads should be treated if not already an Agreed, Consultation, Severely Restricted or Excluded route.

CaG advised that for Consultation Routes within the Highland Council area, he is coming across situations when consulting with them where they require you to nominate a specific contact for all operations (i.e. not just timber haulage). WA suggested this matter be raised at the Highland Timber Transport Group and asked CaG to provide CG with information so that she could discuss with the HTTG Project Officer.

3.2 Haulier Quality Statements

CG advised members that the HTTG have been developing Haulier Quality Statements for specific roads where TTMPs are in place whereby hauliers specify and agree how they will meet the requirements of the TTMP and set out what vehicles they will be using/who will be driving etc..

Members recognised that such a system isn’t relevant for GTTG area at present but agreed that this approach could be taken in future, should non-compliance with TTMPs occur, and that it was a useful tool to ensure that all those involved in timber haulage was aware of their responsibilities/restrictions in place.

DH asked IC how Section 96 might be applied where damage has been caused; specifically if it would be invoked when any damage was caused or just when excessive damage occurred. And equally, would it be invoked when a TTMP had been agreed and complied with but damage was still caused.

IC confirmed that Section 96 could be applied when any damage was caused and could be directly attributable to a specific operation.

FT highlighted how he has been working in an area where a TTMP was in place and agreed with the Local Authority but that an agricultural tractor and trailer was using the road on a regular basis and causing some damage, but obviously operating out with any Timber Traffic Management Plan.

IC explained that “wear and tear” Agreements can be put in place between the Local Authority and a specific businesses prior to any road strengthening/resurfacing works being carried out by the LA and in order to accommodate an expansion to the business premises. A condition survey would also be undertaken at the start and end of the works and if any damage had been caused by construction traffic etc., costs could be reclaimed.

AY highlighted that such agreements would be appropriate in such circumstances, where business premises expansion would only take place once every so many years, whereas the forest industry will be hauling timber on a far more regular basis.

IC asked what the threshold is for consultation with the Local Authority in terms of timber haulage. WA confirmed that it was 1000 tonnes. DH highlighted that for felling licences, it was actually 500 tonnes.

CaG asked how people not engaged with the Timber Transport Group network were supposed to know with whom/when they should consult and suggested a short leaflet be produced and circulated to the sector. Members agreed that a FISA-type checklist/guide would be appropriate. CG to confirm thresholds (i.e. 500 or 1000 tonnes) and draft for comment/approval prior to circulation.

Members also suggested that the links between the Agreed Routes Map and Timber Transport Forum could be enhanced so that it was easier to navigate from the ARM back to the TTF website where more of the good practice information/narrative is located.

3.3 Roadside loading & timber stacking

CG referred members to the previously circulated ***Stacking timber by public roads*** leaflet (see attached) produced by the South of Scotland Project Officer in response to continuing occurrences and associated issues (e.g. debris on the public road) and highlighted that the police have the ultimate sanction under the [Road Traffic \(Scotland\) Act 1984](#) (section 95) and can take the necessary enforcement actions.

CG updated members on FCS’s position; Woodland Officers have been advised to monitor felling proposals for likely harvesting/track routes, access to the public road and, where appropriate, TTMP's. Where they think there could be an issue, Woodland Officers will ask the applicant to demonstrate how they will be complying with the UKFS in implementing their proposed forestry approval project; this may include roadside loading where FCS will be asking the applicant to indicate whether or not they were proposing roadside loading and/or whether the LPA is to be notified as required.

DH advised that felling licences and Forest Plans require consultation with the LA more generally too.

CaG suggested that when harvesting from areas covered by Forest Plans (which would be larger), your options to take timber a different way or be better able to cover the cost of suitable stacking/loading areas were greater and it therefore shouldn't be so much of a problem.

AN advised that he had come across the 20 minute limit but IC confirmed he wasn't aware of this rule.

CG advised member that the TTF has been asked to develop UK-wide guidance on the issue.

3.4 FES lower impact vehicle road classification

AY gave members a presentation on the FES lower impact vehicle roads classification review, advising that the assessment had taken into account a range of considerations including the cost of maintaining roads across the National Forest Estate, the availability of road stone and condition of the public road network leading to/from the forest areas. A draft report has now been produced which highlights those roads within FES Forest Districts which it is proposed will carry the new CAT A-restricted (CAT AR) classification; the recommendations contained within this being very much based on the TTF [Tread Softly](#) publication. AY advised that this information will now be discussed with industry representative groups and it is anticipated that there will be a 3-5 year period for implementation across the NFE. He stressed however that part of these discussions will be to agree an enforcement policy so that policing of the system can be effective and fair. CaG suggested that one way could be through the PIN system.

WA asked if the CAT AR classification would extend right up to access points or would just be in-forest. AY advised that it would take the public road into account.

CaG raised the issue of driver training in light of the fact that the use of CTi would likely increase as a result of this new road classification. LG advised that James Jones provide in-house training and also operate a system whereby new drivers travel with experienced drivers.

CaG asked what information was available on the use and impact of CTi. CG to circulate report written by Jon Ritchie.

CaG also asked how the new CAT AR classification would affect brash recovery/roadside chipping operators. AY confirmed that once implemented, all forest products over a specified volume would be covered by the CAT AR classification.

Members also discussed other potential impacts of the CAT AR roll-out (e.g. sufficiency of supplies and installers of kit, increase in cost of haulage on timber prices, effect on timings of haulage operations etc.). AY confirmed that all these issues need to be fully discussed during the review/debate and that Ken Sinclair will be circulating information for review/comment in due course. AY will forward this to GTTG members.

WA encouraged the industry to take part in the review in order to establish a practical and pragmatic approach.

4. Funding

4.1 Update on Strategic Timber Transport Fund

CG updated members on spend under the current STTF and advised members that the last assessment panel met to consider bids submitted under the final round earlier in the week. All available monies have now been committed and there is no expectation of a further round unless any current projects are de-committed. She advised that this could cause difficulties due to the tight timescales now set for all STTG spending but has previously seen £250,000 of potential support for infrastructure returned to the Scottish Government.

CG advised that members should still continue to consider potential applications and make use of the short pre-proposal form (see attached) so that should a new round of funding be announced, projects could be bought forward relatively quickly for consideration. She also reiterated that Regional Timber Transport Groups have a critical role to play in ensuring that bids are of a strategic nature and are well supported with evidence of need etc..

4.2 Review of previous STTS projects

CG updated members on two complementary audits which have been undertaken on the STTF; one to assess the quality/value for money of in-forest road projects and the other to review the overall administration of the programme.

In terms of the former, a number of in-forest road projects have been selected for a technical review by forest engineers in order to assess the specification provided at application stage vs. constructed/suitability of the roads for timber haulage/current road condition/management of future maintenance etc.. There are no in-forest road projects within the GTTG area.

The results of this small-scale review, together with the administration audit, will be used to inform any future STTF programmes.

4.3 Rural Development funding and forestry infrastructure

CG reminded members of the [Forest Infrastructure grant](#) available under the [Forestry Grant Scheme](#). Under the scheme, £300,000 will be available from 2016 and will provide grant support for the construction of forest road/lay-bys, turning areas and loading bays, bell mouth junctions and the replacements of low level water crossings. The Forest Infrastructure option is limited to woodlands of up to 50Ha, except in cases where low level water crossings are being replaced and will be operated through one application round each year.

5. General Permitted Development Order & Prior Notification

CG provided an update on the recently required Prior Notification for forest tracks & private ways and summarised a presentation prepared by Syd House (see attached). In this, Syd had highlighted the current position, the steps being taken to investigate how PNs could be aligned with existing forestry procedures and made suggestions for the type of information that could be provided with the PN submission. CG advised that Syd would be focusing on this work area in his new role with FCS National Office.

GTTG members expressed concern over potential inconsistencies in approach between/within Local Authorities and agreed that clear guidance is needed, particularly for key areas – e.g. road alteration vs road maintenance.

6. Update on SCOTS Timber Forecasting project

6.1 NFI reports by Council area

CG reminded members that the FC have produced [National Forest Inventory Reports](#) for various Local Authority areas which tie in with Regional Timber Transport Group boundaries; these providing a useful comparison to the timber production data collected through the Scots Timber Forecasting project. Those most relevant to the GTTG are: -

- [NFI 25-year projection of timber availability in the Aberdeenshire Council area](#)
- [NFI 25-year projection of timber availability in the Moray Council areas](#)

CG highlighted that the timber production forecasts provided through the SCOTS project were lower than those predicted in the NFI reports but suggested that as the NFI forecasts were based on a number of assumptions, they would not be directly comparable with the SCOTS data. She also highlighted that S&TTTG members had suggested that under managed woodlands would be recorded in the NFI forecasts but not in the SCOTS data.

7. GTTG members updates

CG advised that she would circulate copies of the TTF update for March 2015 with the minutes (see attached).

FT updated members of a situation which had arisen in the last couple of weeks involving a road closure on an Agreed Routes in Aberdeenshire. No direct notification had been given to either UPM or the landowner (FCS) of the impending road closure other than via signs being placed along the road less than a week before the planned closure.

On noticing the road closure signs, FT contacted FES and Aberdeenshire Council to discuss the impact this would cause in terms of getting the timber to Aberdeen in order to be loading onto an export vessel within the permitted timescales. Two solutions were suggested – one, that the road closure would be delayed by one day and the other, that FCS could allow the timber to be hauled in-forest to an alternative exit.

Members discussed the issue of road closure notifications on Agreed Routes and suggested that, given the strategic nature of these routes and definition of their classification, Local Authorities be asked if they could add ARM data into their maintenance systems so that if any work was planned on any Agreed Routes, they could inform the GTTG in advance via CG.

Members were reminded that for other roads, it is good practice to consult with Local Authorities well in advance of planned harvesting operations so that road closures and other considerations can be taken into account.

CG advised that there are links to road closure information in both [Aberdeenshire](#) and [Moray](#) Council areas on the [Grampian Regional Group webpage](#) but that the interactive map for Aberdeenshire didn't appear to be working. CG to check this out with Aberdeenshire Council.

AY commented that the Moray Council road closures website was a bit confusing as it appeared to list road permits (e.g. for car boot sales) as planned road closures. IC to investigate and report back to the group.

IC updated members on a current situation on a Consultation Route where timber harvesting and haulage had taken place causing significant damage to the road. Moray Council held discussion with the harvesting company prior to work commencing and the landowner had carried out some work on the road, following discussion with the LA roads engineer.

IC asked what members' expectation were in terms of the cost that the Local Authority should bear in such situations.

WA advised that forestry is a legitimate rural industry which pays through taxes and business rates etc. but which also seeks to work in partnership with Local Authorities in order to minimise damage. Therefore, if work is agreed between the LA and landowner but damage still occurs, it would be reasonable to expect the LA to pay to repair the road. Conversely, if no consultation had taken place prior to timber harvesting/haulage, the landowner hadn't carried out the agreed preventative works or had done so to an insufficient standard, then the landowner should be expected to pay.

AY suggested that for normal forestry operations, it was reasonable to expect the LA to pay; large scale developments such as windfarms would be a different matter however.

WA advised that there should be less restrictions when moving timber on Agreed Routes than on other classifications of road where the industry should expect more discussion/possible restrictions.

CaG explained to members that Highland Council have been asking for risk assessments to be completed for all operations. Members were uncertain as to why the Council should require this information and suggested the issue be raised with the GTTG.

CG advised members that she had been asked to give a presentation (see attached) to the North East Industry Group meeting on the discussions the Stirling & Tayside Timber Transport Group have been having with Scottish Water in connection with timber haulage in drinking water catchment areas. The main focus of the meeting with a presentation by SEPA on wider diffuse pollution matters and following the meeting, SEPA expressed an interest in joining the Regional Timber Transport Group network. CG to add John Gorman, SEPA, to the list of GTTG members so that he can attend meetings/send a SEPA representative, as appropriate.

CG updated members on a previous discussion point – timber haulage along the route of the Aberdeen Western Peripheral Route. Aberdeenshire Council had identified the harvesting contractors concerned and CG had emailed them with details of the GTTG, together with links to good practice guidance and an invitation to become involved in the Group should they so wish.

8. Dates of Future meetings

WA confirmed that the dates of the remaining GTTG meetings for this year; these being: -

- Thursday 16 July 2015
- Thursday 19 November 2015