



Minutes for GTTG meeting

Date: 20 November 2014

Location: FCS Grampian Conservancy, Huntly

Present:

Will Anderson (Chair)

Neil Crookston – Scottish Woodlands Ltd (NC)

Cameron Gillies – Euroforest (CaG)

Claire Glaister – GTTG Project Officer (CG)

Lee Grigor – James Jones & Sons Ltd (LG)

Ian Cameron – Moray Council (ICa)

David Hay - Forestry Commission Scotland (DH)

Stuart McFarlane – Aberdeenshire Council (SMcF)

Andrew Nicol – DWP (AN)

Apologies:

Alasdair Cameron – UPM Tilhill

Derek Nelson – Forestry Commission Scotland

Roland Stiven – Timber Transport Forum

Alastair Young – Forest Enterprise Scotland

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.	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

1. Welcome, introductions and apologies

WA welcomed all those present and apologised for not being able to attend the summer meeting at the James Jones & Sons Burnroot Sawmill, which he understood had been very well received. 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 28 August 2014 & matters arising

Minutes of the last meeting were confirmed as correct. Action table below reviewed and amended to reflect current status (those now completed shaded); carried forward actions added to current action table

Agenda Item	Action	Appointed person/s
3. (13/11/13)	Review list of potential Consultation Routes in Aberdeenshire	SMcF
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
7. (20/03/14)	Members to put forward suggestions for future STTS bids	GTTG members
3.	CG to make contact with “missing information” agents on SCOTS project	CG
4.	Prepare and submit STTS application for RTTPO post	IC/CG/WA
4.	Issue and return Letter of Support templates for South Deeside Road bid	CG/WA/DL/AN/RTS
4.	Prepare and submit STTS application for South Deeside Road	SMcF/RaS/CG
4.	Discuss eligible road operations for STTS bid with RS and advise Moray Council	CG/ICa
4.	Issue and return Letter of Support templates for Moray Council STTS bids	CG/WA
4.	Prepare and submit STTS application/s for pre-emptive draining programme	ICa/CG
8.	Highlight Timber Transport Management Protocols at HIFIC meeting	RS

Draft/approve/circulate information flyer and Good Practice leaflet

As previously discussed, CG confirmed that production of an information flyer/Good Practice leaflet is currently on hold pending the development of [FISA Working Group 6](#) Haulier H&S manual and that WG 6 hope that this document will be at final draft stage in January 2015.

3. Strategic Timber Transport Fund

2.1 Results of GTTG area applications

CG confirmed that of the 4 GTTG area applications submitted, all had been successful although the Aberdeenshire Council proposal had been awarded 40% STTS funding rather than the 50% sought. In total, of the £210,150 STTS funding requested, £184,650 had been awarded (92%), this covering the following 4 projects: -

1. The Moray Council: U13E Burn of Fochabers Culvert (FY 2014/15)
2. Aberdeenshire Council: B976 – B9158 Drainage & Edge Strengthening (FY 2015/15)
3. The Moray Council: Grampian Pre-emptive drainage programme 2015 (FY 2015/16)
4. Regional Timber Transport Project Officer for GTTG and S&TTTG (FY 2015/16)

Details of The Moray Council Grampian Pre-Emptive drainage programme for 2015 are attached for information.

SMcF advised that the B976-B9158 project may be undertaken over 2 phases and that the first phase of the work would most likely be undertaken in June/July 2015. AN noted that the mill closed in July which would suit that timescale well. SMcF confirmed that he would liaise with James Jones, together with the other land owners along the route, to endeavour to ensure that timings would be as convenient as possible for all parties concerned.

ICa noted that in their letter of award, they had been asked to confirm what signage would be used to acknowledge the STTS funding and asked if there was any guidance available. SMcF suggested they go back to the STTS administrators to check and also provide details of their proposed signage.

WA, ICa and SMcF expressed their thanks to CG for her support and assistance in the application process.

2.2 Review of STTF/STTS

CG advised (and following confirmation from RS) that of the 29 bids submitted, 19 had been allocated funding with a further 2 currently undergoing further discussion prior to a decision being made. Given the current spend profile, a further bidding round is NOT anticipated although this situation could change if the pending applications were not carried forward or if schemes awarded funding were subsequently withdrawn.

2.3 Future opportunities

As previously discussed, representation has already been made to Ministers for a continuation of the STTS. No decisions are expected until after the Scottish Parliament Election in May 2016.

4. SCOTS Timber Forecasting project

CG advised that following the last meeting, a number of further submissions have been made such that the % woodland cover (Ha) in returns to date figures have increased slightly, but that the GTTG still has the lowest return rate across Scotland at 66%.



CG is still chasing information from agents but as Forest Plans now record timber harvesting data, will liaise with FCS to fill in gaps where Forest Plans have been prepared. NC requested a new map for the GTTG area so that he could provide forecast timber production data and woodland areas managed in the Aberdeenshire area by Scottish Woodlands Ltd.

CG also explained that Phase II of the project was now well underway with maps being produced to show the forecast level of timber haulage of the public road network over the next 15 year period. Members reviewed the draft map for North Scotland (see attached) and AN noted that whilst this showed exit points and an indicative level of lorry movements on particular roads, it didn't show routing information to potential processor destinations. Members recognised that as timber markets vary significantly, it would not be possible to show the potential combination of routes taken by timber lorries from the forest to the mill, although CG confirmed that the mapping system does include a layer showing processor destinations across the study area so that some assumptions can be made.

DH asked if it would be possible to add road condition survey data as another layer to the map. SMcF advised that this data might not be available as an open source GIS layer. CG to discuss with RS and update members accordingly.

Members agreed that the maps, and corresponding exit point data, would be very useful to Local Authorities for identifying future pinch points and strategic planning. ICa asked if the information could also be used to generate funding; WA and CG confirmed that it would provide good evidence for any future funding applications.

In terms of timings, draft maps are expected in the New Year with final maps and corresponding data being made available to RTTGs by March 2015.

5. Timber Transport Forum Website

CG advised that the TTF has been awarded STTS funding to revamp the TTF website. All RTTGs are being invited to make comment/suggestions on the layout/content of their regional pages as well as the wider website. RS is to circulate a template for members to use to direct feedback.

SMcF asked if the regional webpages received much traffic. CG confirmed she doesn't have that data but on asking GTTG members how many have looked at the GTTG webpage, none said they visited the site on a regular basis.

6. Timber Transport Groups event programme

CG reminded members that they do have a budget for hosting events and asked if members wished to consider any specific events to promote the role of the RTTG etc. The GTTG have previously discussed the potential for hosting a meeting to promote the FISA WG6 H&S manual but suggested this should NOT be the only topic of discussion. LG advised that James Jones & Sons organise CPC days for their hauliers and that these might provide an opportunity for links with the GTTG. LG suggested CG speak to Jonathan Ritchie to discuss options. Members agreed that we should link in with other events rather than organising specific GTTG stakeholder events.

7. GTTG members updates

RS had provided copies of the TTF update for November 2014 for circulation (see attached)

CG reminded members of a previous enquiry which asked if there was a standard specification for access points and that on following up the enquiry and speaking to different Local Authorities, it had been established that there wasn't although SMcF advised that there shouldn't be much of a variation between Local Authorities. CG noted that this issue was being discussed across the [Regional Timber Transport Group](#) network and whilst it was recognised that a degree of local flexibility was essential, it could be helpful to have a standard specification for general use. AN expressed some concern over taking a standardised approach as he considered this would inevitably lead to the highest standard (i.e. most expensive) being adopted. WA confirmed that the existing case by case flexibility generally offered by the Councils needs to be retained. Members discussed the specification provided in the Highland Council TEC (see attached) and SMcF explained that the figures stated for sight lines etc., will be considered on a case by case basis and be dependent on speeds anticipated on the road. WA also noted that actual requirements should also be based on the size and scale of the operation.

ICa advised members that he had come across Forestry Extraction Guidelines produced some time ago by Johnny Morren and asked if these could be highlighted to industry. CG explained that this document has been incorporated into the Timber Transport Management Protocols (see attached). CaG suggested that the Timber Transport Protocols should be circulated to those agents not represented on the GTTG. Members agreed this would be a useful exercise, particularly to those who were contacted through the SCOTS data collection project.

ICa provided outline timescales for work to be carried out under the 2014/15 FY STTS projects: -

- Eastern areas – by Christmas 2014
- Western areas – by February 2015
- U13E Fochabers Burn culvert – by February 2015 (road closure required)

SMcF raised an issue of poor practice in timber loading at a site near Maryculter along the route of the new Western Periphery road. No action was required at this stage but if the contractors involved could be identified, CG would issue a copy of the Timber Transport Management Protocols.

AN raised concern over the current hill tracks discussion whereby forest roads are set to be regulated under a Statutory Instrument covering hill tracks, in addition to being covered by the existing Environmental Impact Assessment regulations. WA expressed similar concerns and confirmed that as things stand, the new Statutory Instrument comes into force on 15 December. He also advised that industry representation is being made to the Scottish Government prior to this date to highlight the duplication and detrimental impact this additional layer of bureaucracy will cause.

LG confirmed it has been a busy time for the industry and that there is a continuing issue with the lack of operators (not just timber hauliers). SMcF noted that with the oil and gas industry in the North East, the area effectively has no unemployment making recruitment difficult.



CG advised member that the [Road Haulage Association](#) is currently looking for feedback on driver shortages. Any comments should be submitted directly to Chris Campbell at c.campbell@rha.net.uk.

CG also highlighted that the RHA is involved in the ferry fare review. Again, any comments should be submitted directly to Chris.

CG noted that Chris had also advised at the recent S&TTTG meeting of the 50mph speed trial for HGVs on the A9 and that commercial vehicles/vans will need to be aware of the enforcement of the 50mph single carriageway limit.

CG advised members that Scottish Water have joined the S&TTTG as FCS are keen to introduce them to timber transport issues and for the industry to explain the steps they take to minimise issues. Scottish Water are to circulate details of their current forestry operations guidance so that member can review and comment, as appropriate. CG to forward this information to GTTG members and invite them to comment too.

CG updated members on an FOI request that had been submitted regarding the number of timber lorries travelling along a road to the North West of Tarland. GTTG members confirmed that they did not undertake traffic data surveys along this, or other routes. SMcF advised that they should respond by confirming the GTTG does not routinely carry out surveys on this route.

8. Dates of Future meetings

WA confirmed that the dates of the next three GTTG meetings have been set for the following dates and requested that members put these in their diaries now: -

- Thursday 19 March 2015
- Thursday 16 July 2015
- Thursday 19 November 2015