



Minutes for GTTG meeting

Date: 28 August 2014

Location: James Jones & Sons Ltd, Aboyne

Present:

Donald Beaton – James Jones & Sons Ltd (DB)
 Ian Cowe – Forestry Commission Scotland (IC)
 Neil Crookston – Scottish Woodlands Ltd (NC)
 Cameron Gillies – Euroforest (CaG)
 Claire Glaister – GTTG Project Officer (CG)

Ian Cameron – Moray Council (ICa)
 David Leslie – James Jones & Sons Ltd (DL)
 Stuart McFarlane – Aberdeenshire Council (SMcF)
 Andrew Nicol – DWP (AN)
 Alastair Young – Forest Enterprise Scotland (AY)

Apologies:

Will Anderson – Seafeld Estate (WA)
 Paul Manson – Strutt & Parker (PM)
 Derek Nelson – Forestry Commission Scotland (DN)

Graeme Ralph – Euroforest (GR)
 Ralph Singleton – Aberdeenshire Council (RaS)
 Roland Stiven – Timber Transport Forum (RS)

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

1. Welcome, introductions and apologies

DL welcomed all those present to the James Jones & Sons Burnroot Sawmill and introduced DB, the local harvesting manager for North Scotland. As there were a few new faces, all members introduced themselves, providing a brief summary of their backgrounds and roles. CG wished to extend a particular welcome to ICa who is Moray Council's new representative on the GTTG; ICa is acting Area Engineer. CG advised ICa that RS would be happy to invite him to attend a wider TTF meeting so that he could see how the network operates.

CG confirmed that a number of apologies had been received and that these would be added to the minutes.

DL gave a presentation on James Jones & Sons Ltd, covering the history and development of the company, and of the mill at Aboyne, their areas of business and product ranges, involvement in research and development, raw material requirements and timber harvesting programmes and their timber haulage operations, particularly with reference to their innovative work on low impact technologies.

GTTG members were then taken on a tour of Burnroot sawmill before returning for lunch, kindly provided by James Jones and Sons Ltd.

2. Notes of last meeting on 20 March 2014 & matters arising

Prior to the start of the main GTTG meeting, on behalf of the GTTG, CG expressed thanks to David and his colleagues at the mill for their hospitality for the day and for a very enjoyable tour around the mill.

Minutes of the last meeting 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
5. (18/07/13)	Update ARM website with changes agreed for U140E, U14E & C45H	CG/RS
6. (18/07/13)	Update ARM website to show Consultation Routes	CG/RS
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
5. (13/11/13)	Consider development of pre-emptive drainage programme for Aberdeenshire	SMcF/RaS/CG
2.	Chase up ARM change requests with website hosts	RS/CG
5.	Circulate AECOM questions to nominated contacts	CG/RS
6.	Prepare and circulate draft Good Practice leaflet for comments	CG
6.	Approve Good Practice leaflet for circulate	GTTG members
7.	Members to put forward suggestions for future STTS bids	GTTG members
7.	Aberdeenshire Council to meet with CG to discuss potential bids	RaS/SMcF/CG
9.	Investigate Future Transport Fund options	CG

Review list of potential Consultation Routes in Aberdeenshire

SMcF confirmed that this is an on-going process but that as yet, have no changes to the current ARM to report.

Prepare, circulate and approve draft Good Practice leaflet for comments

CG confirmed that production of a Good Practice leaflet is currently on hold pending the development of FISA Working Group 6 Haulier H&S leaflet.

Investigate Future Transport Fund options

CG confirmed that she had investigated this potential fund but established it was unsuitable for timber transport projects. RS had also advised that the STTS was the Scottish Government's dedicated scheme for supporting timber transport proposals and so should be seen as the first port of call.

3. SCOTS Timber Forecasting project

CG confirmed that survey packs were issued to owners/agents across all Regional Timber Transport Group areas at the beginning of May with an initial return date of 9 June 2014 (those submitting returns by this date would be entered into a draw for a bottle of whisky). The table below summarises the returns to date from the GTTG area.

Local Authority	% woodland cover (Ha) in returns to date
Aberdeenshire	59
Moray	67
TOTAL FOR GTTG	66
Tonnages (2015-2019)	2,925,297
Tonnages (2020-2024)	2,845,551
Tonnages (2025-2029)	2,661,982
TOTAL TONNAGES (2015-2029)	8,432,830
Number of exit points	416
Number of returns	21
Number of woodlands	158
% of woodlands covered by forest plan	91
% of woodlands where forest plan in progress	2
% of woodlands where no forest plan	7
Neighbouring Local Authorities	
Aberdeen City	0

The 9 June return deadline has been extended to 31 July so that additional returns can be made and in addition to the initial survey pack issue, follow up calls, emails and visits (if required) will be made to encourage further submissions.

Members reviewed the overall GTTG woodland map and highlighted a number of forests owners/agents who should be approached. CG to make contact so that an increased return rate can be achieved.



4. Strategic Timber Transport Fund – Potential Projects

4.1 Regional Timber Transport Project Officer

IC explained that the current STTS RTTPO contract runs until 31 March 2015 but that due to the start date of the post and the match funding invoicing schedule, there is an option to extend this until 30 September 2014, albeit without any further STTS grant.

FCS have suggested that an application for one further year of full RTTPO support (STTS and match funding) be submitted. As a result of the existing match funding commitments, this would result in the post being fully funded until 31 March 2106 **without the need to request any additional match funding** over and above that which was committed to the original STTS bid.

Members agreed that a one year STTS application for a joint GTTG/S&TTTG Project Officer should be submitted.

4.2 South Deeside Road draining programme

CG explained that following the previous GTTG, she had met up with RaS to discuss a potential STTS bid for drainage works along the South Deeside road leading from Dinnet to Burnroot Sawmill. SMcF confirmed that Aberdeenshire Council were keen to submit a bid for this work and were looking for the views of the GTTG.

Given the strategic importance of road in to providing access to/from the sawmill and, in turn, the strategic importance of the mill to the forestry sector in the North East of Scotland, GTTG members were happy to support the proposal.

AN highlighted that improvements to the road would not only benefit the mill but would also do likewise for a number of local estates – e.g. Glen Tanar, Inchmarnoch – and would be happy to provide Letters of Support from these Estates to submit with any application. CG confirmed that she would be able to use the timber production forecast figures from the SCOTS project for these Estates to include in the bid.

DL confirmed that JJSL would equally be happy to support such a proposal and provide a Letter of Support. In addition, they would be able to provide a summary of the road's usage from a JJSL point of view (roundwood, co-product, timber products/sawnwood and other HGV/LGV traffic), together with third party traffic using the public weighbridge and that from local estates.

SMcF confirmed he would go back to RaS to advise of the Group's support and ask him to liaise with CG in the preparation and submission of the bid.

CG explained she would be able to provide support with the preparation of the STTS application and would collate the relevant Letter/s of Support from the Group.



4.3 Moray Council pre-emptive drainage programme (Phase II)

ICa explained that following the success of the Moray Council 2013 pre-emptive drainage programme STTS application, Moray Council engineers had continued to assess and identify roads that would be used for timber transport and highlight those they considered would benefit from drainage and other works – e.g. passing places etc..

The resulting list of roads included a number of those placed on a “reserve list” for those covered by the current STTS project as well as some additional roads which were also thought to be of high priority.

The Moray Council had identified additional work – bridge widening, culvert replacement, road re-alignment, resurfacing etc. – and asked if this work could be included in any funding application too.

CG suggested she discuss with RS and advise ICa accordingly.

GTTG members suggested that it would be useful to ask other RTTGs if they had similar issues/concerns and also that hauliers could be invited to highlight any problematic sites/roads.

Whilst it was recognised that this would encourage dialogue between RTTGs and, hopefully, improved engagement with hauliers, it wasn't thought feasible at this stage given the short timescales involved.

GTTG members were happy to support a further pre-emptive drainage proposal from The Moray Council and that CG provided support with the preparation of the application, including collating the relevant Letter/s of Support from the Group.

5. Timber Traffic Management Plans

CG advised the group that a number of site-specific “TTMPs” were being developed between the LA and individual owners/agents in addition to those created for a particular route with multiple users.

She also explained that forest agents had suggested that having such “agreements” in place, together with the information set out in the Timber Transport Management Protocols was proving to be useful in terms of setting out any agreed conditions in writing – e.g. safety considerations, roadside loading restrictions, road closure requirements, monitoring etc..

GTTG members were happy to hear that the best practice guidance was being used and that such agreements were put in place following discussion and agreement with both parties. They highlighted however that any conditions included needed to be considered on a case by case basis rather than applied across the board.

6. Forest entrances and access points

CG summarised a query submitted to the S&TTTG whereby an agent had asked if there was a standard LA process for dealing with existing and new forest access points onto a classified road as they had seen various approaches taken by different Councils. She also highlighted that other RTTGs were considering this issue and specifically that the HTTG were currently considering a Technical Paper produced by Highland Council (see attached).

SMcF and ICs confirmed that whilst any specific requirements would need to be considered on an individual site basis and would depend on whether the access was a new access, involved significant alterations to an existing access point or was just for the use of an existing entrance, full planning permission and a Road Opening Permit may be required. They also recommended that forestry managers/owners should speak to the Road Development Officers in the relevant Local Authority as requirements do vary between different Councils.

7. Project Officers and GTTG member updates

DL advised GTTG members that James Jones & Sons are currently involved in a R&D project looking at a tracker-based in-cab system which could provide spatial data for operational sites. Information on site hazards (e.g. powerlines), internal roads etc., would be transmitted directly to the cab, thereby assisting with in-forest routing, hazard awareness and risk management.

DL also advised the group that FISA are currently looking at goalpost standards and signage for access roads and operational sites.

IC and CG highlighted that reports of roadside loading appear to be increasing. DL suggested that we should be careful not to prohibit such operations as this could be the only option. GTTG members agreed that such instances reinforce the need for forest/harvesting managers to consult with the relevant Local Authority prior to commencing operations to enable the correct traffic management systems to be discussed, agreed and implemented.

RS had provided a summary of current activities being undertaken by the Timber Transport Forum (see attached).

CG highlighted a request from a GTTG member that the Timber Transport Management Protocols be discussed as part of the Highlands and Islands Forest Industry Cluster meeting on 30 October 2014 and which will be focusing on Timber Haulage - Treading Softly and Safely.

8. Date of next meeting/s

CG confirmed that the dates of the next three GTTG meetings have been proposed as: -

- Thursday 20 November 2014
- Thursday 19 March 2015
- Thursday 16 July 2015