

North East England Timber Transport Group

Meeting held at the Offices of Egger (UK) Limited, Hexham
at 1.30 p.m. on Tuesday, 4th September, 2012

Present:

John Paterson, Chairman (JP)	Egger Forestry Products Limited
Cameron Smith (CS)	Sheffield & Co. Limited
Athole McKillop (AMc)	Land Factor
Crispin Thorn (CT)	Forestry Commission
Jon Bates (CT)	Forestry Commission
Andrew Harper (AH)	Cumbria County Council
Dan Barry (DB)	BSW Timber
Cameron Scott (CSc)	Northumberland County Council
Dick Phillips (DP)	Northumberland County Council
Carolyn O'Brien (CO'B)	Northumberland County Council
Keith Taylor (KT)	Northumberland County Council
Roland Stiven (RS)	Timber Transport Forum
David Robson (DR)	UPM Tilhill
George Nicholson (GN)	A & J Scott Limited
Keith Haywood (KH)	Taylormade Timber Products
James England (JE)	Dumfries & Galloway Council (South of Scotland Timber Transport Officer)
Mike Yerbury (MY)	Egger Forestry Products
Hazel Newman (HN), Secretary	Egger (UK) Limited

Apologies:

Jane Karthaus, Confor; Neil Dyson, Fountains Forestry; Richard Pow, Forestry Commission; Richard Scott, BSW Timber; Robert Scott, SGS Timber Transport; Tommy Milburn, Euroforest; Ian Robinson, Scottish Woodlands; Gary Leach, Durham County Council; Matthew Wilson, Egger Forestry; Stephen Swailes, Iggesund Forestry

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1. Chairman, John Paterson, welcomed everyone to the meeting and noted apologies.

2. **Minutes of the Last Meeting held 12th June, 2012**

The Chairman thanked Cameron Smith for chairing the last meeting in his absence. The main action point from that meeting had been the digitisation of agreed route maps by JE. It was confirmed that these had now been handed over to DP and CO'B of Northumberland County Council.

3. **Timber Transport Forum Update**

- Roland Stiven confirmed that the TTF would have a stand at the APF Show, Warwickshire, from 13-15th September, beside which would be parked a James Jones timber lorry fitted with a full tyre pressure control system. Volunteers would be welcome to help man the stand.
- RS brought the Group up to date regarding the project to host GB agreed route maps on a new independent WebGIS. Currently hosted by FC Scotland, a new solution was required due to constraints on FCS and because coverage of the maps had extended into England. Project cost

Action

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estimated to be around £10,000; £2000 of which had been offered from FC England, and £500 each had been requested from Cumbria TTG, North East England TTG, North Yorkshire Timber FQP, and Wales TTG. RS in the process of applying to the SSTs for the balance of funding. Cameron Scott offered a contribution of £500 on behalf of Northumberland County Council. - The leaflet on Managing Timber Transport had been reprinted and was available to download from the website. - There were no new issues arising from Timber Transport Forum meetings	
4. Agreed Route Maps Update - A meeting had been held earlier in the day with representatives of Northumberland County Council, when the route maps produced by the working groups had been presented. These would now be passed to road inspectors in the various areas for their input. It was anticipated that this would take several weeks, after which they would be returned to the Agreed Route sub-group for further discussion. The date of 17th October was provisionally set for the sub-group to meet at Hexham to consider the Council's feedback. Following broad agreement the maps could then be referred to on an informal basis. <i>(This meeting was subsequently postponed awaiting feedback from NCC).</i> - RS pointed out the need for consistency between counties - AH/JE to check definitions at the boundary with Cumbria. - Discussion took place on the process of formal adoption of the agreed routes. In the case of both Cumbria and North Yorkshire, Council members had been briefed in the first instance, and then the public consultation process was rolled out through Members via Parish Council meetings. Cumbria had also issued a press release. CSc advised it was important that Council members were fully informed regarding the issues surrounding the agreed routes, and were made aware of the importance of the sector to the rural economy. It was agreed that the short film 'National Treasure' produced for the Independent Panel would be valuable in demonstrating the scale and diversity of the industry to Council members and Parish Councils. JP to supply copies to CSc and DP. It was agreed that in the first instance the Agreed Routes Maps should be presented at each of the three Area Committees, and from there disseminated to Parish Councils. The best means of further communication of the maps to be discussed during the consultation process. - DP pointed out that the public consultation process and approval by the Highways Department were two separate issues, and once the routes had been agreed by Highways engineers, the map would be a working document. JP agreed that the map would continue to evolve as issues arose and feedback was received from public consultation.	Members of Agreed Routes Sub-Group AH/JE JP

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- CO'B reported that following a complaint received by a local Councillor from residents of Gilsland, the Highways Department had been involved in attempting to resolve issues relating to timber extraction from a site at Crammel Rigg, north of the village. Dialogue with the harvesting and haulage contractor was ongoing. However, the initial problem had been difficulty in ascertaining the identity of the parties involved. It was suggested that TTG members would be a useful source of information in such circumstances. Discussion took place regarding details available from the Public Register of New Planting and Felling on the FC website.

(DR later pointed out that only details of proposed felling on privately owned land appears on the register, Forestry Commission felling being 'Crown exempt')

- CO'B explained her intention to set up a database of active harvesting sites across the County with details of felling licence applications, planning permissions/restrictions for internal Council use. In the meantime, she suggested that before commencing harvesting operations, the Highways Authority should be informed in order to pre-empt problems at a later stage. However, it was felt by members that once the ARM had been adopted it would be clear which routes required such consultation.
- CT reiterated that the UK Forestry Standard made specific reference to timber transport groups, their advice on preferred routes and the need for the industry to engage with local communities. Because conditions imposed on felling licences did not extend beyond forest boundaries, it was important that the ARM was established as soon as possible, after which the Forestry Commission had a clear role to promote the map and raise awareness of route categories. For instance, issue of a felling licence could be accompanied by a letter referring to the agreed routes map.

6. **Highway Issues**

- **Hauxty Wood** – the issues discussed at the last meeting had now been resolved by the implementation of traffic light control at access/egress to the site, and creation of a lay-by. DP reiterated that development of the bellmouth without the necessary planning consent was not only breaking the law, but had been a dangerous exercise on that part of the B6320.
- **Crammel Rigg** – As discussed earlier in the meeting. JP pointed out that in the sales details for the property, no mention had been made of any difficulties with the road. He suggested that in future, where properties were not on 'agreed routes', sales particulars should include a contact number for the Highways Department. This would enable potential purchasers to identify any possible constraints in advance.
- CO'B pointed out that felling approval was a separate issue to timber extraction, and it was agreed that the identification of 'consultation routes' was key to an improvement in communications between all parties, and a reduction in the types of issue under discussion.
- In response to a query from CO'B it was clarified by CT that it was a statutory requirement for the Forestry Commission to consult with local

authority planning departments regarding felling licences, and he agreed to provide CO'B with information on how to access the Public Register on the FC website. AH confirmed this practice at Cumbria County Council.

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- **Winter Working** – it was agreed that interested members would meet in late October/early November to discuss winter working – potential dates to be circulated. DP suggested that Richard Hayes would attend on behalf of the County Council, and Dave Woodhouse would represent Forest Enterprise. Meeting to be held at the Egger offices.
- **Independent Panel on Forestry** – CT referred members to the Final Report of the Panel, available on the DEFRA website. The report confirmed that the forest estate should remain in public ownership, and addressed issues including the creation and management of increased forest cover; a wider partnership between Government, forest owners and businesses; protection of woodland ecosystems, and the need for the Forestry Commission to evolve into a new public body with new powers. Specific comment was made on the way in which changing Governments impact the public forest estate, and the need for the new body to act independently under Charter. A response from Government is expected by January 2013.
- **Rural Development Programme for England** – CSc reported that the current rural development programme, which had contributed towards woodland creation and support for the sector since 2007, would come to an end in December 2013. A national working group was currently looking at what a new programme will look like beyond that. CSc to feed back any relevant information to the TTG.
- DR wished to place on record his appreciation of the co-operation of Mr. Ian Hendry, before his departure from NCC, in quickly addressing issues relating to a site he was working at Dilston. This enabled him to extract timber over a very short timescale, making the site economically viable.

HN

CSc

8. Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting will be held at the offices of Egger UK at 1.30 a.m. on Tuesday, 11th December, 2012.