

TimberTransportForum

delivering solutions for a growing UK harvest

Timber Transport Forum Meeting

10:30 22nd October 2021

Remote by Teams

Agreed Minutes

Chair: Roland Stiven (in lieu of Alistair Speedie)

Present Colin Mackenzie (CM), Iain Catterwell (IC), Neil Stoddart (NS), Robin Pope (RP), Roland Stiven (RS), Simon Stuart (SS), Paul Boobyer (PB), Kirsty Robb (KR), Mark Crowley (MC), Andy Brown (AB), Justin Huthersall (JH), Jackie Roberts (JR), Mike Yerbury (MY), Jason Hubert (JH), Crispin Thorn (CT), Will Anderson (WA), Andy Leitch (AL), Alex Murray (AM),

Apologies Alistair Speedie, James England, Simon Oldham, Will Richardson, James Macdonald, Claire Glaister, Keisha Moore, Nigel Smith

Agenda

1. Welcome

All attendees introduced themselves. Roland Stiven chaired the meeting in lieu of Alistair Speedie.

2. Minutes of Previous Meeting

It was requested that in the future, minutes are sent out soon after a meeting takes place, rather than shortly before the following meeting some four months later. It was also requested that the minutes are abridged.

NS noted that Creel Consulting Ltd has no remit within the sphere of FMOC Machine Operator training.

RS requested some minor changes to wordings.

The minutes of the previous meeting were otherwise agreed.

Re action from previous meeting (Chair and CG update; Sectoral approach to rural road investment). AS has spoken to Martin Reid of the RHA. Martin is keen to collaborate and will ask his colleagues Chris Ashley (carbon) and Tom Cotton (roads) to get in touch with the TTF.

3. Actions

Actions from previous meeting

Re letter to Police Scotland highlighting October 2020 updates to timber strapping guidance: The Highland Council has sent a letter to the Roads Safety Officer at Police Scotland.

The Grampian TTG and Stirling & Tayside TTG intend to vote on whether to send a letter to Police Scotland (Note: It was agreed at the last TTF meeting that the letter should be passed to police colleagues in each RTTG area).

The Argyll TTG has sent a letter to police authorities but has not received a response.

AL confirmed that Confor regularly updates relevant parties on safety matters.

Partnering Charter. PB to refresh TTF Partnering Charter with a view to republishing. The revised Charter will be launched at the TTF annual conference in March 2022. This action is carried forward.

New Actions

PB to liaise with Forum members on proposals for an STTS review (ref Agenda item 8).

NS to report back to the TTF and FISA re his November update to the Irish Forest Industry Transport Group on what the TTF is doing, and vice versa.

PB will draft a letter for the chair to send to forestry ministers highlighting the role of the Forum and the importance of the Strategic Timber Transport Fund.

4. Decarbonisation of Timber Transport

Update on the Decarbonisation Subgroup's Work (Paul Boobyer)

Data collected and presented in the Creel timber transport survey report will be used to calculate a carbon footprint for timber haulage in the UK. All caveats and assumptions and associated data will be published.

AS has been invited to attend a meeting of the National Stakeholders Group (NSG) where decarbonisation will be discussed. RS asked all present if there were any objections to AS representing the TTF on the NSG. No objections were raised. Confor will also provide input to the NSG.

EV Truck Trials (Neil Stoddart)

A project is being developed for a trial of four EV trucks (three artic) by four businesses in 2022. A Project Preparatory Grant application will be submitted to Scottish Forestry in due course. Subsequent bids for funding will be made to appropriate bodies such as STTS, Scottish Enterprise or SSE/Scottish Power.

Hydrogen Hub, Argyll (Iain Catterwell)

There is a plan by Green Energy International (GEI) to create hydrogen on an industrial estate in Oban. One aspiration is for hydrogen-fuelled timber trucks to be trialled in Argyll. IC has been in touch with GEI and can offer assistance to the project.

5. FISA Update (Neil Stoddart)

NS showed a short report of the STTS-supported auto-tensioner timber strapping systems (attached as an appendix to these minutes). The feedback from the trial has been positive; the drivers involved prefer these systems to manual straps.

NS also gave an update on the Timber Haulage Academy training event for new entrants: Two additional training videos for the CPC driver training module will be produced, bringing the total produced to eight.

6. Regional Updates

- **Highland (Colin Mackenzie / Robin Pope)**

Good progress to date on the 2021 STTS projects despite pressures on supply chains. Altnabreac – the rail trial is now in the planning stage. Drimnin – thousands of tonnes have been transported by sea over the last couple of months. There have been discussions with Boyd Bros Ltd about an MSRS project to support local domestic shipping routes.

- **Argyll (Iain Catterwell)**

The 2021 STTS projects are progressing well. Other potential projects are coming out of the woodwork.

Greenpower International are planning a hydrogen production facility at their Carraig Gheal windfarm at Kilchrenan. A depot is being established in Oban, initially expected to supply the local commercial bus fleet and potentially the local closed gas supply network - replacing tanker delivered LNG. They are targeting forestry haulage (and harvesting) business and are keen to hear from interested parties and will scale up according to need. IC is engaged in this process.

There are ongoing issues with the A83 at the Rest and Be Thankful.

- **Stirling & Tayside & Grampian (Claire Glaister)**

Italicised updates supplied by CG. Abridged by PB:

RTTG meetings: Plans to hold hybrid meetings in the future.

Letter to Police Scotland about 5th Edition CoP and Strapping Guidance: Both RTTGs discussed the draft letter; the groups agreed that a vote should be taken.

During a webinar on rural property investment, the agreed routes were mentioned as being an important consideration.

Progress on 2021 STTS projects: the C33 (Balquidder) works are near completion despite staff resource issues; work is progressing on the U390 in Angus; the B827 and B954 will be added to the Agreed Routes Map; there have been discussions about another possible partner for the Rannoch Rail project.

- **Ayrshire & South Lanarkshire (Simon Stuart)**

All mainland STTS projects have been completed. Confirmation on progress is being sought from North Ayrshire Council.

An excluded route has been used by timber HGVs, and a near-accident was witnessed. Timber trucks have also been using a weight-restricted bridge. SS has been advising group members that Agreed Routes constraints should be included on grant schemes and property sales schedules. SS suggests that access points should be reviewed in relation to planning permissions.

- **D&G (James England)**

Italicised updates supplied by JE. Abridged by PB:

STTS schemes are progressing. A private bid was withdrawn from STTS. The aim is to resubmit a revised bid next year with appropriate access rights.

Neil Murray (NM) is stepping down as Chair of the D&G group due to his change in role, moving to Scottish Forestry as South Scotland Conservator. JE thanks NM for his input and for supporting JE's project officer role over the last ten years.

Information such as TTMPs isn't always being passed onto prospective purchasers as part of a forest sale.

There are some issues where consultation doesn't happen on haul routes, which has led to inappropriate routes being used. If they are not designated, they would be by default a consultation route. JE finding he is having to reinforce this point.

Council staff are extremely busy and are struggling to undertake site visits.

- **Scottish Borders (James England)**

Italicised updates supplied by JE. Abridged by PB:

STTS schemes largely completed with a slight underspend noted.

A recent incident involved a harvester working on the side of the A7 with no traffic management in place. The operator decided to fell some of the smaller trees prior to the traffic management being installed later that day. It was unsafe and has been investigated. A FISA safety bulletin is being produced.

JE suggests that we should be proactive and check with the Trunk Road agencies to ensure they understand timber transport and the latest code of practice. Many of the contacts have changed in the Trunk Road agencies and we need to ensure they are aware of the regional project officers.

- **Cumbria and North-East TTG (Mike Yerbury / Paul Boobyer)**

The Cumbria and North-East timber transport groups have been merged. Mike Yerbury has been appointed as the chair; Paul Boobyer is secretary.

English STTS – Local MP Guy Opperman is supportive in principle, but there is no financial support for an English STTS via the Borderlands Growth Deal. Local authorities will attend a meeting to explore options in early 2022. It is hoped that a part-time project officer can be funded and appointed.

An unloaded timber lorry left the road in Northumberland recently and caused significant damage to a private dwelling.

The new Southern Development Route south of Carlisle has received full planning consent and work has started.

There is an aspiration to develop a Forestry Innovation Centre within the Borderlands Area. This project is currently at the scoping stage and was one of three projects that forestry professionals within the Borderlands area wished to see established.

- **North Yorkshire (Crispin Thorn)**

Concerns have been reported in the local media over a proposed access route in the Yorkshire Dales. The next meeting for the North Yorkshire Freight Quality Partnership is planned for 3rd December 2021.

- **Wales (Jackie Roberts)**

A study is underway to examine the potential of decarbonising timber supply chains in Wales. The Tywi Transport Forum has been running for ten years and involves several private-sector companies. There is an interest from other local authorities. Similar projects are perhaps required at a local, rather than regional, level.

There are six to seven timber transport pinch point zones across Wales.

The overloading of timber HGVs has been an issue. Data is being shared with VOSA.

7. Other Members' Updates

Yorkshire: *Phytophthora ramorum* continues to infect sites.

8. Any Other Business

- **STTS review**

RS and PB have drafted some suggested amendments to the STTS guidance and application form which will be shared with the STTS panel prior to incorporation in any application process in 2022. The expectation of a broader review of STTS was re-iterated, covering issues like multi-year, regs surrounding number of landowners, durations of the scheme. PB to liaise with members on taking forward a review. Due to staff changes at councils, awareness-raising of the STTS may be required.

- **Regional groups' letter to ministers**

It was suggested that the Forum should write to the forestry ministers highlighting the role of the Forum and the importance of the Strategic Timber Transport Fund. PB will draft a letter for the chair to send.

- **Ireland**

The Irish [Forest Industry Transport Group](#) is a voluntary pan-industry group. NS to update Irish sector on what the TTF is doing, and vice versa. NS to report back to the TTF and FISA.

Date of next meeting: 28th January 2022 @ 10:30.

Appendix

Re Agenda Item 5: Auto-tensioner strap trial



Some key points so far from the ExTe TU Autotensioner trials as a result of Scottish Forestry funding.

Two trucks have been installed with TU systems and using them over the last year. Both are wagon and drags.

One truck belongs to Annandale transport, the other belongs to James Jones at Mosstodloch.

Feedback from James Jones (09/09/21)

1. 8 TU tensioners were installed to wagon and drag, with one on each bolster. This is a set up similar to what was observed in Sweden on a visit to the ExTe factory in 2020.
2. Installation by Jimmy Munro. As it were the first installation, there were some teething issues to be addressed which took time to work out i.e., best place to install etc.
3. The TU system has worked well from the start and feedback has been very positive from the operator who would not want to go back to manual strapping.
4. Very impressed with the constant tension the TU provides for safety and load security.
5. James Jones did raise the issues of upfront cost and the added weight the tensioners bring to the trailer.

Feedback from Annandale Transport (21/10/21)

1. 5 TU tensioners installed to wagon and drag. Installed on the chassis between bolsters. Installation undertaken by FTM.
2. Overall feedback is very positive, and the system is well received by the operator (Brian) who would not want to go back to manual strapping. Gains a lot of attention in forests and in sawmills and the process of unloading has become faster in the sawmills.
3. Very happy with the safety aspect of the TU systems keeping the load secure at all times.
4. Lack of visibility on the front bunk of the wagon and rear bunk of the drag makes it a little difficult to pick up the hook to bring the strap across, especially when the loading area is narrow in the forest and the timber stacks are relatively close to the side of the truck.



Feedback from Clark Engineering

We are very happy with the feedback from the two TU systems on trial in Scotland. We have heard similar positive feedback from customers who have trialled the TU in England with speed and load security a common theme. There are a lot of options when it comes to specifying the TU, with a number down to owner / operator preference. We are sure that over the longer term and the more the TU's work in the UK forest industry, the benefits will become clear and each operator can find the set up and configuration that works best for their needs. We are in discussions with ExTe regarding the operator feedback from the UK and how this compares to the usage in other markets where more TU systems are in use. Overall, we are very happy with the TU systems and look forward to working with customers to optimise their use in the UK market.

