

Minutes for GTTG meeting

Date: 09 September 2021

Location: via Teams

Present:

Will Anderson – Chair (WA)
Paul Barron – Moray Council (PB)
Paul Boobyer – Timber Transport Forum (PBo)
Steve Conolly – Cawdor Forestry (SC)
Niall Duncan – Scottish Woodlands (ND)
James England – South Scotland Timber Transport Office (JE)
Cameron Gillies – Euroforest (CGi)
Claire Glaister – GTTG Project Officer (CG)
Lee Grigor – James Jones (LG)

John Mackie – Scottish Forestry (JM)
Paul Mathieson – Tilhill (PM)
Graeme McCallum – Forestry and Land Scotland (GMcC)
Derek Murray – Aberdeenshire Council (DM)
Douglas Murray – Fountains Forestry (DoM)
Roland Stiven – Scottish Forestry (SF)
Phil Whitfield – Tilhill (PW)

Apologies

Mark Atherton – Moray Council
Angela Funk – Aberdeenshire Council
David Leslie – James Jones
Calum Murray – Tilhill
Hamish Murray – Forestry and Land Scotland
Graeme Ralph – Euroforest

Frank Tomlinson – DSW
Claire Wightman - Treestory
Harry J Wilson – RTS
Mike Yerbury – Egger
Alastair Young – Forestry and Land Scotland
Rajmund Zygodlewicz – AJ Scott

Agenda Item	Action	Appointed person/s
5. (13/11/19)	Colour up all B-class road default Agreed Routes	CG/JE
2.	Circulate information from TGR to Aberdeenshire and Moray Council for consideration and action	CG
2.	Discuss minimum tonnage thresholds for consultation with other departments and confirm position	DM/PB
3.	Set up poll for members to vote on whether specific GTTG letter regarding Code of Practice/Strapping be sent to Police Scotland	CG
4.	Circulate exit point data to Aberdeenshire and Moray Councils	CG
5.	Set up Doodle Poll to canvas availability in late January 2022 for next GTTG meeting	CG

1. Welcome, introductions and apologies

WA opened a round table introduction and welcomed several new members to the GTTG as well as the familiar faces after the long gap between meetings.

2. Notes of last meeting on 13 November 2019 & matters arising

Due to the length of time between this and the last meeting, actions carried over from 13 November 2019 were considered to have been completed unless noted otherwise.

Agenda Item	Action	Appointed person/s
7. (17/03/16)	GTTG to discuss/agree requested change to ARM classification of U144H	All
3. (12/12/16)	Discuss potential planning permission conditions for road improvements at Conyachie Road end	DM
3. (16/03/17)	Discuss potential for STTS application for an in-forest route through the Gownie road forest complex	NC/CG
6. (15/11/17)	Discuss STTS eligibility/Prior Notification requirements with RS	CG/RS
2.	Circulate Local Authority Timber Transport protocols to TGR to highlight consultation thresholds	CG
2.	Confirm minimum tonnage thresholds for consultation on felling licences	TGR
3.	Liaise with Scottish Forestry over potential for additional STTS support	AF/PB
3.	Discuss potential locations for targeted kerbing projects	AF/LG
3.	Investigate ownerships and timber volumes at potential Moray STTS bridge project locations	CG
5.	Circulate road numbers/location information to members and make available on the Local Guidance page of the GTTG website	PB/AF/CG
5.	Confirm contact details for British Cycling Championships and circulate relevant closures to GTTG members	AF/CG
7.	Circulate link to Confor article on Plant Passporting	CG
8.	CG to check involvement of FISA Haulage Working Group during development of FISA Welfare Provision Guidance	CG
8.	Circulate TTF update – November 2019 to members	CG

Confirm minimum tonnage thresholds for consultation on felling licences at meeting with FCS: CG reported on information provided by Tim Gordon-Roberts (TGR) which confirmed that the 500 tonne threshold for consultation was agreed at a multi-agency meeting held in January 2017; several Council departments had been represented at the meeting and the 500 tonne/no thinning threshold was requested in response to non-road issues and not by the roads department.

TGR advised that if the Council wished this to be changed, they would need to discuss internally with all the relevant departments and come back to Scottish Forestry with a new proposal with which all departments agreed.

PB and DM re-confirmed that they were happy to stick with the original 1000 tonne threshold and hadn't had any issues with sites of less than this and would follow up with colleagues.

3. GTTG members updates

3.1 Round table updates and topical discussion

3.1.1 Member updates (incl. impacts of Covid/Brexit on timber transport, key issues and opportunities)

Local Authorities: Pandemic had a significant impact on work programming and delivery/budget spend and reallocations, staff redeployment, absence and shortages with the resultant backlog of work, focus on emergencies repairs only and limited capacity to consider additional projects. There was also an increase in the number of complaints from members of the public;

Industry: Forestry had been considered a key sector and was therefore able to work through the lockdown although at the start, some companies put staff on furlough, a couple of mills shutdown/switched to essential production only, access to facilities for timber hauliers was a problem as too the availability of equipment, parts and training and forests saw an increase in public access, sometimes necessitating additional safety measures during operations. Due to its essential sector status, the profile of the sector was raised, as too the long-standing issue of driver shortages.

Outwith Covid impacts: PW reported that a number of small woods are now coming into management with farmers looking to market timber and that these may not be considered sufficiently “strategic” to warrant support from STTS. RS confirmed that it is recognised that the definition of strategic will vary across the different timber transport group regions and that applicants need to justify why their proposals are strategic when preparing bids. PB requested that members are reminded/remind their hauliers that if timber is coming out of new areas, they consult with Local Authorities (roads and, if applicable, planning) prior to haulage commencing to discuss any specific measures that may need to be taken.

JM confirmed that Scottish Forestry are seeing an increase in Felling Permission Applications and LTFP amendments as the demand for timber is high.

3.1.2 TTF update (incl. timber transport survey, decarbonisation, review of STTS, brash recovery, conference, website)

PBo introduced himself and provided an update on the current work of the TTF (see attached).

CG advised members that the TTF had requested that a letter be sent to Police Scotland to highlight the new edition of the Road Haulage of Round Timber Code or Practice and strapping guidance. Members discussed level of compliance across Grampian, the role of the police in monitoring, guidance vs. legal requirements and education vs. enforcement and agreed to a vote on whether a specific letter should be sent by the GTTG.

3.1.3 FISA Haulage Working Group update (incl. strapping guidance, training and promotional videos - watch the trailer [HERE](#))

LG updated the group on the STTS-supported auto-tensioner pilot project and how the equipment impacted on operational efficiency and costs.

Members discussed the on-going work of the FLS low ground pressure working group and current review of catchment classification.

PBo advised members that stickers have been produced to show strapping guidance and circulated to mills for distribution to hauliers. More could be provided if ordered (small charge) and CG confirmed that should members wish for more supplies, these could be provided through GTTG funds.

4. Strategic Timber Transport Scheme update and future GTTG projects

4.1 Update on 2021-22 projects

- 4.1.1** RS summarised his new role with Scottish Forestry and that £7m had been made available in the latest STTS round - £2M from Scottish Forestry and £5M from Transport Scotland via the Futures Transport Fund which is under the responsibility of a new Minister.

RS advised that the role of decarbonisation in the climate change emergency is becoming an increasing focus which may be reflected in the availability of STTS support. He confirmed that the TTF has set up a working group to review the STTS and will present its recommendations to Scottish Forestry; members requested that this review also considers how projects involving single owners/where small timber volumes were forecast but had high community benefits could be supported and private sector contributions further encouraged.

Members discussed how (electric charging) infrastructure in rural areas will need to be available, that rural roads will still require to be maintained for use by any vehicle and potential impacts that such technology could have on payloads, frequency of loads etc...

- 4.1.2** Aberdeenshire: DM reported that four schemes had been successful, two were underway (A93 Kincardine Bridge and C56M Suie Hill) and two were due to start in October (A97 Logie Coldstone to Tillypronie and U89M Bellabeg).

Moray: PB confirmed that no proposals were put forward this year due to staff resources.

4.2 Proposals for 2022-23 projects

4.2.1 Aberdeenshire:

CG advised that she is to liaise with DM and Angela Funk regarding a potential bid covering the Grampian Forest area. DM confirmed they would need to use exit point data and that passing places on such roads would be beneficial; LG requested that these/some be large enough to accommodate timber lorries.

4.2.2 Moray:

PB requested exit point data and suggestions from industry as to pinch points/areas for potential improvement.

5. Date of next meeting/s

- 5.1** Suggestion of late January 2022 proposed. CG to set up Doodle Poll to canvas availability