

Minutes for GTTG meeting

Date: 08 March 2023

Location: via Teams

Present:

Iain Mackenzie – Chair (IMK)
 Paul Barron – Moray Council (PB)
 Paul Boobyer – Timber Transport Forum (PBo)
 Niall Duncan – Scottish Woodlands (ND)
 Cameron Gillies – Euroforest (CGi)
 Claire Glaister – GTTG Project Officer (CG)
 Lee Grigor – James Jones (LG)
 Paul Mathieson – Tilhill (PM)
 Ian Peacock – Aberdeenshire Council (IP)
 Claire Wightman – Treestory (CW)

Apologies

Will Anderson – Chair
 Neil Crookston – Scottish Woodlands
 Roland Stiven – Scottish Forestry
 Brian Strachan – Aberdeenshire Council

Agenda Item	Action	Appointed person/s
5. (13/11/19)	Colour up all B-class road default Agreed Routes	CG/JE
5. (03/03/22)	Review ARM classifications in Moray and advise of potential revisions	PB
6. (05/10/22)	Arrange visits with roads department staff	CG
2.	Change ARM classification of C12E Branchill road to Agreed Route	CG
4.	Investigate whether a map showing road numbers in Aberdeenshire can be circulated to members	IP
5.	Re-circulate link to Roadworks Online for notification of road closures	CG
5.	Organise visits to forest management companies to promote GTTG and timber transport initiatives/good practice	CG
5,	Investigate option to have one nominated timber transport contact in Aberdeenshire Council	IP
6.	Investigate road occupation permit process in Moray Council	PB
6.	Follow up report of timber lorries through Towie with hauliers/forest managers	CG
6.	Provide updated contact information for new council areas, if required	IP
6.	Circulate Handling roundwood in ports FISA guide	CG

1. Welcome, introductions and apologies

IMK, James Jones Area Harvesting Manager for North Scotland, was welcomed as Chair of GTTG meeting in Will Anderson's absence and then invited round robin introductions as there were a few new other faces.

2. Notes of last meeting on 05 October 2022

GTTG members were happy to accept the minutes of the last meeting as an accurate record of discussions.

Agenda Item	Action	Appointed person/s
5. (13/11/19)	Colour up all B-class road default Agreed Routes	CG/JE
2. (09/09/21)	Discuss minimum tonnage thresholds for consultation with other departments and confirm position	DM/PB
5. (03/03/22)	Review ARM classifications in Moray and advise of potential revisions	PB
3. (05/10/22)	Send timber transport information to SLE to promote GTTG and wider timber transport network	CG
5. (05/10/22)	Circulate details of ARM colour change trial to RTTGs to seek comment	CG/RTTGs
5. (05/10/22)	Report on responses/next steps for ARM colour change	CG
6. (05/10/22)	Arrange visits with roads department staff	CG
7. (05/10/22)	Update Aberdeenshire Council contacts on GTTG web page	CG
7. (05/10/22)	Circulate FISA Timber Haulier Driver CPC link to members	CG

Confirm minimum tonnage thresholds for consultation on felling licences at meeting with FCS: Members agreed to close out the minimum tonnage threshold for consultation action as the local authority roads department representatives were happy to operate the long-standing GTTG arrangement whereby anything under 1000 tonnes did not require notification unless it was in conjunction with other harvesting operations along the same road which would bring the total tonnage above 1000 tonnes (see also GTTG minutes 05/10/2022).

Report on responses/next steps for ARM colour change: Discussions with other RTTGs and the TTF are on-going.

Review ARM classifications in Moray and advise of potential revisions: Members discussed that now that the STTS-supported work along the Branchill road has been completed, they were content that the ARM classification of this road should be changed from Consultation Route (default) to Agreed Route.

PB will discuss other potential ARM revisions across Moray with colleagues – particularly those associated with any weight restrictions - and circulate information for discussion at a future GTTG meeting.

3. Strategic Timber Transport Scheme update and future GTTG projects

3.1. Update on regional 2022-23 projects

As previously advised, work on the C12E Branchill road has been completed and claimed.

3.2. Proposals for 2023-24 projects

3.2.1. Aberdeenshire

As previously advised, a restructuring process and staff changes within the Council has resulted in less ability to focus on STTS bid development. No bids from Aberdeenshire Council are anticipated for 2023/24.

3.2.2. Moray

PB highlighted that Moray Council are moving away from detailed timesheets which would make allocation of staff time (and cost) spent on STTS-supported work more difficult to evidence for claims.

As previously discussed, the local authority would be looking for more third party involvement as roads which would benefit improvement work for timber transport operations tend to be minor rural roads which serve a limited number of other road users/are located in lower priority areas for short term capital investment.

3.2.3. Timber Transport Project Officer

As previously discussed.

LG asked if STTS funding could be available for part funding the purchase/fitting of CTI units in more lorries. CG advised that funding for what is now considered well-established technology was unlikely to be supported but that piloting new systems/equipment (e.g. auto-tensioners) could be considered.

4. Agreed Routes Map

4.1. Colour Change pilot

A summary report (see attached for information) was circulated to GTTG members following the end of the trail which indicated there was a consensus of support for the proposed colour change from those who responded. CG has subsequently asked if all other RTTG POs could discuss the pilot with their respective groups so that a decision can be made as to whether the colours across all areas should be changed to the traffic light system or remain as is.

Connected to road classifications, CGi asked if it would be possible to have a map which shows road numbers for Aberdeenshire Council (we have a 2017 document showing those in [Moray Council area](#) on the [GTTG Local Guidance](#) web page). IP offered to look into whether it would be possible to access and circulate this sort of information.

5. Your top three wishes

GTTG members were asked to suggest what work they would wish the RTTG PO undertake.

LG highlighted that notification of road closures would be useful – and has been circulated previously – as recent road closures have resulted in key timber transport routes being diverted at the same time.

CG advised members that a decision had previously been made to stop the circulation of road closure notifications by the RTTG PO as this information was available elsewhere but that this could be reviewed again. Members discussed how road closure information can be accessed via sources such as [Scottish Roadworks Online](#) website (closures of less than 5 days should be notified/posted on the website at least one week in advance; those of more than 5 days should be notified/posted on the website at least one month in advance). This link, plus ones to road closure notifications in Aberdeen City, Aberdeenshire and Moray, have been posted on the [GTTG Local Contacts](#) web page. CG to re-circulate the link to the Scottish Roadworks Online website.

CW highlighted that a lot of forest managers, particularly those new to the industry, aren't too familiar with the work of the Regional Timber Transport Groups, ARMs, good practice etc., so suggested it would be useful for the RTTG PO to give presentations either for individual companies or at industry events. CG to follow up with forest management companies.

Members felt a priority action was for the RTTG PO to provide a link between the industry and local authorities, particularly where there has been staff change within councils. CG asked if it would be possible to have one point of contact for all timber transport enquiries in Aberdeenshire (as PB is in Moray). IP offered to discuss with colleagues and in the meantime, advised that contact details for the different areas have been updated on the [GTTG Local Contacts](#) web page (see also below).

- ✓ Banff & Buchan: banffandbuchan.roads@aberdeenshire.gov.uk (Alistair Millar)
- ✓ Buchan: buchan.roads@aberdeenshire.gov.uk (Alistair Millar)
- ✓ Formartine: formartine.roads@aberdeenshire.gov.uk (Anne Buchan)
- ✓ Garioch: garioch.roads@aberdeenshire.gov.uk (Anne Buchan)
- ✓ Kincardine & Mearns: kincardineandmearns.roads@aberdeenshire.gov.uk (Ian Peacock)
- ✓ Marr: marr.roads@aberdeenshire.gov.uk (Ian Peacock)



6. GTTG members updates

6.1. Round table updates and topical discussion

6.1.1. Member updates

- LG asked that care be taken during the review of TTF documents – e.g. Tread Softly – to avoid the risk of applying too many restrictions to day to day operations as there is limited capacity within the industry. PB recognised that there needs to be a happy medium between running businesses sustainably and protecting the road asset for the taxpayer and that if industry felt the measures being requested were too restrictive, to contact him to discuss;
- A number of members highlighted the difficulties encountered (e.g. delays/need to chase) when waiting for responses to consultation requests, particularly when information on any timber transport management measures is required for the tendering process. CG requested that members contact her if responses aren't forthcoming so that she can follow up too;
- PM raised an issue where a local authority had asked him to apply for a road occupation permit and how the forms on which to do so didn't cover the type of equipment/machinery that was to be used. PB advised that he would check the situation from a Moray Council point of view and send information to CG for circulation;
- CG discussed an enquiry from a member of the public who has expressed concern over timber lorries driving through Towie. The road is a default Consultation Route, but the resident was concerned that the route wasn't suitable for timber traffic and that lorries were travelling too fast on the approach to/away from and through the village. Members suggested a number of hauliers/forest managers who may be operating in the area so CG to follow up;
- CGi advised that windblow is still being cleared from smaller-scale sites;
- LG highlighted the traffic routing between Aberdeen Port and the South Harbour isn't ideal for lorries as it increases mileage between the two destinations. The group discussed how this routing would have been part of the approved planning permission. CG advised that she had emailed Aberdeen Port to raise concerns but has had no response;
- IP advised members that Aberdeenshire Council has undergone a restructure and from a roads service point of view, will be split into six areas across three regions – North, Central and South. IP will provide updates to contact details, if required, so that the GTTG Local Contacts web page can be updated;
- Members discussed whether the group would wish to produce Terms of Reference for the GTTG. The subject had been discussed in 2018 when members didn't see any benefit to the group in producing such a document and that formalising the group in this way may deter members from joining/taking part. Members agreed that this position still stands and that they do not wish to produce a ToR for what is a voluntary group of representatives with an involvement in timber transport.

6.1.2. TTF update

PBo updated members on the current work of the TTF, this including: -

- Business Plan – currently with the graphic designers and then to be posted on the TTF website;
- Three documents are being updated (Loading timber from roadside forests, Tread Softly and Transporting timber on the public road network). Final drafts for all three are scheduled to be circulated to TTF members by the end of March;
- A PR strategy for the TTF is under development;
- A study is being undertaken into the availability of/access to EV and hydrogen infrastructure. The pilot study is focused on Ayrshire and The Borders and is due to report by the end of March;
- Alistair Speedie has retired as Chair of the TTF; Jason Hubert, Scottish Forestry, has taken on the role of Interim Chair and Andy Leitch, Confor, and James England, D&G Council, have taken on the role of Vice Chairs;

6.1.3. FISA Haulage Working Group update

Members noted that a new FISA guide for handling roundwood in ports is in development and will be circulated in due course. **UPDATE SINCE MEETING:** Please see [FISA Safety Bulletin: Timber stacking in ports \(April 2023\)](#);

7. Provisional dates for next meetings

7.1. Wednesdays 28 June, 4 October 2023 and 6 March 2024