

Minutes for GTTG meeting

Date: 28 June 2023

Location: Scottish Forestry, Grampian Conservancy, Huntly

Present:

Will Anderson – Chair (WA)

Julie Ballantyne – Moray Council (JB)

Paul Barron (via Teams) – Moray Council (PB)

William Clark (via Teams) – Scottish Forestry (WC)

Niall Duncan – Scottish Woodlands (ND)

Cameron Gillies – Euroforest (CGi)

Claire Glaister – GTTG Project Officer (CG)

Lee Grigor – James Jones (LG)

David Henderson – Forestry and Land Scotland (DH)

Steven Hutcheon – Scottish Forestry (SH)

John Mackie – Scottish Forestry (JM)

Paul Mathieson – Tilhill (PM)

Ken Mercer (via Teams) – Aberdeenshire Council (KM)

Apologies

Mark Atherton – Moray Council

Steve Conolly – Cawdor Forestry

Ian Peacock – Aberdeenshire Council

Graham Ralph – Euroforest

Claire Wightman – Treestory

Rajmund Zygodlewicz – A&J Scott

Agenda Item	Action	Appointed person/s
5. (13/11/19)	Colour up all B-class road default Agreed Routes	CG/JE
6. (05/10/22)	Arrange visits with roads department staff	CG
5. (08/03/23)	Organise visits to forest management companies to promote GTTG and timber transport initiatives/good practice	CG
6. (08/03/23)	Circulate Handling roundwood in ports FISA guide	CG
2.	Post Road Permit weblinks on GTTG Local Guidance web page	CG
2.	Circulate example Trunk Agency form	WA/CG
2.	Update Towie residents of GTTG discussions	CG
3.	Discuss current and potential future match funding contributions for RTTG PO role	CG/All
4.	Discuss potential start/end point considerations on C35H and U139E with colleagues and supply shapefile to CG	PB
4.	Update ARM website with updated Moray ARM classifications	CG/JE
5.	Circulate FISA roadside safety guide, once published	CG
5.	Circulate examples of haulage notification/new planting consultation forms	CG
5.	Submit final comments on Transporting timber on public roads to CG	All

1. Welcome, introductions and apologies

WA welcomed all those present in person and on-line and invited introductions as a few people were new to the GTTG. WA also expressed thanks to Iain Mackenzie for chairing the last GTTG meeting and to PB who joined the meeting whilst on holiday.

2. Review of notes of last meeting on 08 March 2023 & matters arising

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
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

ARM review in Moray: See item 4.

Map of roads in Aberdeenshire: CGi asked if it was possible to have a map of road numbers in Aberdeenshire to refer to when submitting haulage plans. KM advised that he didn't think a public-facing map was available (a PDF list of Public Roads for both Aberdeenshire and Moray Councils is on the GTTG [Local Guidance](#) webpage). Whilst not ideal for overall coverage, members also discussed how road numbers are identified when you click on a road which carries an ARM classification on the Agreed Routes Map website.

Aberdeenshire Council representatives: KM confirmed that queries should be directed to the area email addresses provided on the GTTG [Local Contacts](#) website so that enquiries can be best directed. He confirmed that his contact email address could be provided to GTTG members but not posted on the TTF/GTTG Local Contacts webpage.

Road permits: PM summarised previous discussions regarding a request to apply for a road occupation permit and lack of suitable form to complete. PB, in discussion with colleagues, has reviewed information provided for Moray Council and has a weblink to direct GTTG members to information about a range of permits used in this local authority area. Members agreed that this would be useful to include on the GTTG [Local Guidance](#) web page. CG to post link on website and, if available, include one for Aberdeenshire Council too. WA advised that he has submitted similar forms to a Truck Road Agency and can provide the form for CG to circulate to members for information.

Timber lorries through Towie: KM confirmed that Aberdeenshire Council are currently reviewing speed limits in villages across the local authority area. GTTG members discussed the measures taken to date in response to residents' enquiries and were content that these were appropriate, reasonable and proportionate. CG to update residents to advise of discussions.

3. Strategic Timber Transport Scheme update and future GTTG projects

3.1 STTS for 2023-24

WC provided update on current awards and advised that the STTS Annual Report (2023) has been published (copy attached). Members discussed the reduction in 2023/24 fund, future expectations and impact on future projects.

3.2 2023-24 projects

3.2.1 Timber Transport Project Officer

Members discussed the role of the Project Officer, future funding and contracting arrangements, specifically the impact of a reduced STTS budget on match funding contributions and attitude to increased standardisation of the role. Members agreed that the role is key in facilitating timber transport discussions across the area and were keen to investigate future funding options and maintain regional focus/flexibility. CG to discuss current contributions/potential increases with current match funders.

4. Moray Agreed Routes Map review

PB presented proposed ARM classification changes, explaining that these focused on reflecting weight restricted bridges (to mark up as Excluded Routes) and roads on which there is Unsuitable for HGVs signage (to change to Severely Restricted Routes (SVR)). Members were happy with the majority of the proposed changes but requested additional consideration be given to the start/end locations of two proposed Severely Restricted Routes (C35H and U139E). PB to discuss with Road Traffic colleagues to discuss option to use supplementary signage to indicate start/end point of SVR classification. PB to confirm options with CG and submit shapefiles so that ARM website can be updated.

Members also discussed whether heights of bridges should be added as a layer to the ARM website (e.g. there are 12 height restricted bridges in Moray). It was concluded that as this could clutter up the ARM website and that the information should be available elsewhere, this wasn't required at this stage.

The accuracy of ARM plotting was also discussed. It was recognised that some of the variances will be legacy issues but as each ARM review is undertaken, these should reduce.

WA expressed thanks to PB on behalf of the GTTG for his work in reviewing the Moray ARM classifications.

5. GTTG members updates

5.1 Round table updates and topical discussion

5.1.1 Member updates

- KM updated members on condition reports and current budgets for roads in Aberdeenshire Council and impact on council restructuring on staff resourcing;
- PM noted that roadside signs and signalling is an area of increasing comment. CG advised that FISA are producing a roadside working leaflet to cover this and will circulate once published.
UPDATE SINCE MEETING: [Tilhill Safety Bulletin September 2023](#) covers importance of planning signage and contacting a local authority to close or restrict carriageway usage;
- SH highlighted that the focus on woodland creation is creating a lot of comment from communities on timber transport. SH also advised members that a new interim Chief Executive, Paul Lowe, is in post after Dave Signorini took up the interim post of Director;
- LG noted reduced funding and affect this could have on road condition/improvement programmes and highlighted that the sector is already developing/working with new technologies to minimise impacts. WA advised that it's important for the sector to work together to highlight the need for suitable infrastructure to serve new (and existing) areas of woodland creation;
- LG confirmed that James Jones & Sons would be willing to host visits;
- CG updated members on the ARM colour change pilot. Other RTTGs have agreed to the change but one would like to see the change on the ARM website before it goes live;
- CG advised members that a trial of 2 EV timber lorries in Scotland, Net Zero Timhaul, has begun; one lorry is being run by James Jones & Sons Ltd in Lockerbie and the other by ScotLog in Inverness. Managed by Creel Maritime, more details on the trial can be found [HERE](#).

5.1.2 TTF update

5.1.2.1 Role, membership, priorities, delivery, communications

- Members recognised that the TTF should be a powerful, collective voice and identified the main roles they would like the TTF to perform – promotion of industry (including what measures are already taken), developing good practice and lobbying for investment in infrastructure;
- Members also suggested that the TTF do more to encourage industry to carry out consultation, and not just during LTFP scoping, and asked if there were any standard templates as to what information was requested/should be provided. CG to circulate examples used elsewhere which cover proposed timber haulage operations and new planting considerations;

5.1.2.2 Transporting timber on public roads: Consultation and engagement guidance

- Members were asked to submit any final comments to CG so that a final draft could be signed off at the next TTF meeting.

5.1.3 FISA Haulage Working Group update

No update available

6. Provisional dates for next meetings

6.1 Wednesdays 4 October 2023 and 6 March 2024

UPDATE SINCE MEETING:

Thursday 2 November 2023 and Wednesday 21 February 2024