

# **Constitution of the Forestry Commission Trade Unions Area Committee for England**

## *Preamble*

*The main Forestry Commission Trade Union (FCTU) constitution provides for a regional representational structure expressed through five Area Committees (ACs); one each for, England, Scotland, Wales, Silvan House and Forest Research.*

*Each AC has its own constitution, in addition to that for the main FCTU. These constitutions replace previous constitutions for Regional Staff Council Trade Union Sides.*

*Each AC constitution is a stand alone document, but should be read within the context of the broader FCTU.*

*This preamble does not form part of the constitution.*

## *Title*

- 1) The title shall be "Forestry Commission Trade Unions England" (FCTU England)

## *Membership*

- 2) The FCTU is a partnership of those members of the constituent unions employed within the Forestry Commission. The constituent unions are:
  - a) Public and Commercial Services Union;
  - b) Unite the Union;
  - c) Prospect;
  - d) GMB Union;
  - e) First Division Association.

## *Purpose & Principles*

- 3) The purpose of the AC shall be on behalf of the FCTU; to protect and promote the interests of union members within the Forestry Commission in England, through the co-ordination of the views and efforts of the constituent unions.
- 4) In pursuing this purpose the AC will at all times give due regard to the principle of consensus decision making and to ensuring democracy and accountability to members.

## *Devolved Authority*

- 5) The AC's authority is devolved, as far as its own constitution allows, from the FCTU Departmental Committee (DC); and extends to issues and areas that only concern members within England. Other issues are reserved to, and must be remitted to, the DC. The DC reserves the right to direct or guide the AC as it may deem necessary from time to time.

## *Remit*

- 6) The ACs remit is to:
  - a) To identify issues of concern to members in England, and to determine the most effective manner for representing and resolving those issues.
  - b) To encourage all members to take an active role within their union.
  - c) To encourage, coordinate, support and the work of the local staff councils, health and safety reps, and learning reps within England.

- d) To assist local reps in representing the interests of union members in England to managers, in the most effective manner possible.
- e) To engage in negotiations with senior managers on devolved England matters.
- f) To draw to the attention of the DC, any England issues of which the AC believes they need to be aware, and to assist in the determination of Forestry Unions' policy.
- g) Where necessary, to coordinate actions with other ACs, in order to deal with issues of common concern.
- h) To ensure that effective communication exists with members regarding matters of concern to England.

### *Composition*

- 7) The AC will consist of ten elected members, all of whom will be members of the FCTU. Members will be elected by their constituent unions according to their own processes. The composition of elected representatives will be as follows:
  - a) PCS                    4 seats
  - b) Unite                    4 seats
  - c) Prospect                2 seats
  - d) GMB                    0 seats
- 8) The AC may from time to time co-opt additional members as it deems necessary or desirable. When desired, the Secretary may invite additional persons to attend all or part of a Committee meeting<sup>1</sup>.
- 9) When a representative is unable to attend a meeting of the AC, a substitute may be appointed by their constituent union.

### *Officers and Elections*

- 10) The AC will elect a chairperson from amongst its elected members; and a secretary, health and safety coordinator and a learning coordinator from amongst its elected or co-opted members.
- 11) The role of the Chairperson will be to provide effective strategic leadership to the NOC by:
  - a) Overseeing the effective conduct of AC business;
  - b) Taking a lead in the determination of the AC's priorities and strategic direction;
  - c) Providing guidance and support to AC representatives.
- 12) The role of the Secretary will be to ensure the effective delivery of AC business by providing administrative and organisational support to the AC.
- 13) The role of the health and safety coordinator will be to oversee matters relating to H&S within England; to offer support, guidance and advice to FCTU H&S Reps in their area; and provide a link between the AC and other ACs and the DC on H&S matters.
- 14) The role of the learning coordinator will be to oversee matters relating to learning within England; to offer support, guidance and advice to FCTU learning Reps; and provide a link between the AC and other ACs and the DC on learning matters.
- 15) Officers will be elected for a period of one year by the AC.

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<sup>1</sup> A standing invitation from the Secretary will be extended to the FCTU Chairperson and Secretary to attend any or all of the meetings of the AC.

- 16) The process for the election of officers will be determined by the Secretary in accordance with the following criteria:
- a) Elections will take place at the first meeting of the AC after 1<sup>st</sup> April each year;
  - b) Nominees must be proposed by their own union, which may nominate one candidate for each post being elected;
  - c) Nominations will be taken at the AC meeting;
  - d) Votes will be cast by show of hands by elected members of the AC. A simple majority is required. Where a member cannot attend the meeting they may appoint a proxy to vote on their behalf. Co-opted members may not vote.
- 17) Co-opted members may be appointed at any meeting of the AC on the basis of a simple majority vote of elected members.
- 18) The appointment of all co-opted members will automatically lapse at the end of the first meeting of the AC after 1<sup>st</sup> April each year, unless reaffirmed at the meeting.
- 19) Officers may be deselected by a vote taken at an extra-ordinary meeting of the AC. De-selection votes cannot be taken at ordinary meetings. Votes will be cast by show of hands by elected members of the AC. A two-thirds majority is required.
- 20) Co-opted members may be deselected at any ordinary or extra-ordinary meeting of the AC by a vote by show of hands of elected members of the AC. A two-thirds majority is required.
- 21) Where the post of Chairperson or Secretary is unfilled, either through de-selection, resignation or other circumstance, the other postholder will assume the duties of both posts pending the outcome of an election which will be taken at the next meeting of the AC.

#### *Meetings*

- 22) A quorum for the AC shall consist of the Chairperson, plus one representative from each of the unions. However, where there is not a representative from one (and only one) of the unions, then a meeting will be deemed to be quorate, unless that union has formally requested that a meeting or a particular issue on the agenda of a meeting should not be regarded as quorate.
- 23) The AC will meet at least three times per year. Additional meetings may be called at the discretion of the Chairperson or Secretary.
- 24) Extra-ordinary meetings of the AC will be called when formally requested in writing to the Secretary by representatives, from two or more unions. Such requests must be made no less than twenty eight days prior to the suggested meeting date, and the Secretary shall give not less than twenty one days notice of the proposed meeting to AC members. Extra-ordinary meetings will only consider matters included in the request.
- 25) The AC will work at all times on the basis of consensus decision making. Wherever practical this will be achieved by each union formally confirming its approval of the decisions and resolutions of the AC; such confirmation will not be unreasonably withheld. However, where in the view of the Chairperson, the AC is not moving towards a consensus, a decision will be made by a simple majority of votes of elected members of the AC. In the event of a tied vote the issue under consideration will be remitted to the DC for further consideration.
- 26) The AC may form standing or ad-hoc sub-committees, as it deems necessary, to consider issues or represent the AC as remitted.

#### *Area Trade Union Sides (ATUS) and Area Staff Councils (ASC)*

- 27) The AC will appoint a chairperson and other elected or co-opted members as it deems necessary to form ATUSs to negotiate and liaise with senior managers within England in accordance with the Area Staff Council structures and constitutions.

28) ATUSs will operate as standing sub-committees of the AC and will derive their authority from the AC.

29) ATUSs are responsible through the appropriate ASC for encouraging an open, positive and inclusive relationship with senior managers, for conducting negotiations, and making other representations to senior managers either through specific direction or guidance as determined by the AC from time to time.

*Amendments to the Constitution*

30) Amendments to this constitution and ASC constitutions may only be made by the FCTU Departmental Committee.