

November 2009



**England**

**Allan MacKenzie**  
*Chair*

Dear Union Member

### **How do we meet the changes that are almost certainly heading towards us in the Forestry Commission?**

I have already written to you about facing up to change and we can be certain that the challenges being highlighted in the forthcoming Pre-Budget Statement will have implications for all of us. If you think that you or the role you undertake will remain unaffected by change, we in the FCTU are certain that that will not be the case - it may not happen straight away; it may not happen for a period of time, but be assured it will happen.

Many of you will be affected by the changes that have happened over the past 10 years. Some of you will have seen large teams who were once the front line in delivery being replaced by people with different skills, employed to take on different jobs. To staff still undertaking those very traditional roles it must seem to be like an endless erosion of those roles and skills. We must remember, however, that the FC needs to aspire to meet the challenges and opportunities being offered to it; whether it be via Government policy, partnerships or by simply doing things in a more modern and efficient way.

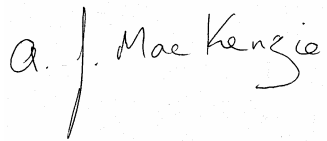
It is to the FC's credit that staff numbers have remained fairly static for a considerable period of time and that redundancies have been minimal. It is fairly certain that if the FC and its staff adopt a 'negative' attitude to the forthcoming changes then we may see a reduction in the numbers of staff and a scaling back of important programmes. It is in of all our interests to adopt a 'positive' attitude and forward to look absorbing the changes - but on our terms and within our control.

Most of the changes that we are likely to encounter will require a high degree of trust in the way that FC's managers interpret the challenges and how they use staff to meet them. It is important that the FCTU seeks to consult at all levels to also ensure that resources are being used to provide the greatest benefit. We have stated that we will work with the FC to meet the challenges faced from outside the Department,

which also means that we will do all in our power to ensure that there will not be any detriment to members' terms and conditions.

Future pay claims will need to take serious account of the pressures on public expenditure and we may be asked to make some financial sacrifices. We will need to ensure that we don't lose jobs as a result of being overzealous in how we take forward any pay claims. Job security has to be the overriding factor for the foreseeable future; we may need to adopt different strategies to achieve other benefits, which do not incur additional costs to the department.

Much of what I have written here is an insight to my thoughts and concerns. It is important that we discuss the inevitability of the forthcoming changes and how we, as union members, can best face up to challenges we face in a modern and democratic way.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "a. j. MacKenzie". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

**Allan MacKenzie**  
*FCTU England Chair*