



**MINUTES OF THE FORESTRY COMMISSION TRADE UNIONS' CORE GROUP
MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY 18TH MARCH 2008, ROOM 3, 1ST FLOOR, IN
SILVAN HOUSE, EDINBURGH**

Present:	Robert Beaney	FCTU Chair
	Edward Shephard	FCTU Secretary
	Allan Mackenzie	PCS
	Lorraine Adams	Prospect
	Roy Laird	GMB
	Sue Gillingwater	FCTU Office
Minute Secretary:	Sam Telford	FCTU Office

1. Introduction

Robert welcomed the Core Group and thanked everyone for attending, in particular Lorraine Adams who had replaced Tony Cousins as Prospect lead representative.

2. Apologies

Apologies were received from Malcolm Currie and Tim Gill.

3. Minutes of 16th January 2008

The above were accepted as an accurate record of the meeting.

4. Pay & Reward 2008

Edward reported that all four ballot results for Pay 2007/2008 had been good despite the long delay, and that feedback was generally very positive. The group concurred. It was noted that HR would now make the necessary arrangements to implement the award as part of the March salary payments.

The group **agreed** that a joint unions pay claim for 2008/2009 should be submitted for the 3rd week of April, prior to the Executive Board meeting. Edward circulated copies of the Treasury Civil Service Pay Guidance for discussion and the group recognised the influence that this could have on management's position during negotiations.

Although the group felt that a different approach was needed in the claim for this year, it was clear that elements of the 2007/2008 claim were relevant to upcoming negotiations, in particular general pay increase, progression arrangements, annual leave, overtime and TOIL. The group discussed the possibilities of seeking significant improvement in these areas and the process of formulating a claim. Following this discussion, it was **agreed** that Edward would produce a draft claim after the Easter break in order for the group to consult with their respective committees.

Action Required: Edward Shephard

5. CSR/Efficiency Update

Edward said that he had attended the recent England Staff Council meeting and reported that FC England have been given a one year CSR settlement from DEFRA. He added that they were anticipating an indicative settlement for the next two years in late spring.

The group had a confidential discussion on the Land Disposals Programme and the following action points were agreed:

**Action Required: Robert to contact John Cryer, Chris Kaufman & draft a letter
Edward to contact Mark Pritchard and the Director General**

6. Health & Safety

Robert advised that he and Allan would be meeting with Emily Ramsay on 9th May to discuss the structure of a bespoke course for Health & Safety representatives. He added that Learning & Development were keen to deliver the course when organised.

Sue advised that the England NOC were looking for a new Health & Safety Co-ordinator and said that they would be contacting Robert, asking for a list of H&S reps.

Action Required: Robert to collate a list of H&S reps for the next meeting

In response to a question from Lorraine on the FC Policy on Lyme disease, Robert said that he and Allan have had discussions with FC HS&E, looking at raising awareness of Lyme disease throughout the organisation. He said that the FC has been very receptive and has agreed to produce a much more graphic information leaflet, improve upon the PowerPoint display and produce a credit card style information note that can be carried by staff. Allan said that they hoped to see a section about Lyme disease added to all First Aid courses, higher emphasis during New Entrants courses and a responsibility by local managers to raise awareness and discuss with staff the aspects surrounding this disease. The group agreed that once the new material becomes available, members will be much better informed and be more able to recognise the steps that an individual can take to prevent contraction.

It was noted that Robert and Allan would be looking at H&S issues and producing the paper for the Departmental Staff Council meeting in June.

Action Required: Robert and Allan

7. NOC Support Review Update

Sue reported that the NOC review had been completed and that a recommendation paper was submitted to the FCTU Council in February. Sue was pleased to report that all 7 recommendations (as below) had been agreed.

Recommendation 1:

Given that this issue was raised by all of the NOCs and that it has been sometime since the Facility Time Agreement has been looked at I believe that this is an opportune time to undertake such an exercise.

Recommendation 2:

Following the completion of Recommendation 1 a campaign is launched to once

again raise managers' awareness of its existence and their responsibility in complying with its content.

Recommendation 3:

There is a definite need to clarify the role and remit of the NOC so that members fully understand their responsibilities. Existing information which is contained in the Constitution should be updated and modified so that it provides comprehensive guidance and information for both new and existing NOC members.

Recommendation 4:

To enable NOCs to have the capacity to develop and concentrate resources on trade union issues the role of co-ordinating and 'managing' the function of NOCs should be carried out by the FCTU office.

Recommendation 5:

Any training required to carry out existing or new NOC roles should be coordinated centrally by the FCTU office.

Recommendation 6:

The term NOC has never really fulfilled its purpose in describing this area of the joint union structure. A title is needed that stresses the unity and cohesiveness of the joint unions, a name that will be immediately identifiable and can be linked to FCTU GB Council and the FCTU office. My recommendation therefore is for the NOCs to be renamed to perhaps something along the lines of FCTU-England, FCTU-Research, etc.

Recommendation 7:

Work should be undertaken to develop a communication strategy for each NOC taking all the above points into consideration. This area of work should form part of the FCTU Office support function.

Sue advised that she would now be looking at each of the NOC's constitutions, key roles and remit, and would be working to produce a project initiation document.

8. Communications

Edward distributed the updated workplace meetings spreadsheet for information.

Edward advised that the discussion forum on the FCTU website had been closed. The group agreed that although the website had made significant improvement in communication, the forum had not been used to generate meaningful discussion.

Sue expressed concern that the flyers sent from the FCTU office promoting the new website had not reached many of the workplace contacts. Following discussion, Edward said that he would design a new poster to be sent around workplaces and added that he would also be creating an FCTU website business card.

Action Required: Edward

9. Inventory & Forecasting Review

Lorraine explained that Inventory & Forecasting Review had reached a stage where draft scenarios had been drawn up and approved by the Project Board, and TUS members had been invited to help analyse these by submitting comments on the various options. Lorraine said that various comments had been made from staff through OSU, TSU and BSSD Team Leaders and Heads of Divisions but it was agreed that a combined view of union members was needed.

The group expressed concern that the review could have significant consequences and impact on members and following a discussion on how to get staff to fully engage in the review, it was agreed that FR NOC would write out to members to encourage them to respond with their concerns.

Action Required: Edward

Edward said that the [Consultation Document](#) was available on the FCTU Website, which contains:

1. A Report setting out the purpose, background, context, scenario methodology, Project boards deliberations, future scenario options, funding and next steps.
2. Answers to some key questions: 9 key questions along with answers.
3. Stakeholder Consultation: Staff are invited to respond to these 6 questions.

10. AOB

10.1 Diversity Training

Edward referred to his email asking who would be interesting in having level 4 (policy making) Diversity training. Lorraine, Edward and Robert expressed interest in attending the course and Roy advised that he would contact Alistair Gillies to ask if he would be also willing. However, Edward said that it was unclear at the moment as to how many trade union representatives would be able to partake.

Action Required: Roy Laird & Edward to arrange attendance

11. Date of Next Meeting

It was noted that the next meeting would take place on **30th April 2008.**