



MINUTES OF THE FORESTRY COMMISSION TRADE UNIONS' CORE GROUP MEETING HELD ON MONDAY 8TH SEPTEMBER, ROOM 4, 1ST FLOOR, IN SILVAN HOUSE, EDINBURGH

Present:	Edward Shephard	FCTU Secretary
	Allan Mackenzie	PCS
	Lorraine Adams (minute secretary)	Prospect
	Roy Laird	GMB
	Malcolm Currie	Prospect FTO
	Tim Gill (Items 1-4 / by telephone link)	Unite

1. Introduction

Edward welcomed everyone to the meeting and thanked them for attending.

2. Apologies

Apologies were received from Danny Williamson, Robert Beaney and Sue Gillingwater.

3. Pay 2008

It was noted that the first pay negotiations meeting would be held on Tuesday 16th September and Edward said that management would be responding to the joint unions claim with an opening offer. He added that the meeting would most likely take place before Treasury could approve the offer and would therefore be a "without prejudice" meeting. It was agreed that the group would aim to respond to management with members' views at the negotiations meeting on 6th October.

The group held a confidential discussion on the details of the pay negotiations and a number of emerging ideas regarding the Pay & Reward strategy, taking the recent changes in inflation and cost of living into consideration.

4. Disciplinary & Grievance Procedures

Edward referred to the draft proposal; his letter to HR sent in April and the response to the letter he received in August. The group discussed the proposal in depth and highlighted the key issues surrounding the proposed changes. These issues were noted and Edward said that he would include them in his formal response that would be sent to HR toward the end of September.

5. Recruitment

Allan referred to the paper submitted to the FCTU Council in October 2007 on union recruitment. The paper indicated that there is a risk of overall membership density dropping if the unions fail to recruit a sufficient number of new members. Allan highlighted the changes in membership density since the figures were last analysed and reported that although the total number of FC staff has remained static, the union membership percentage has decreased.

The group agreed that a recruitment drive was vital. In response to a question on targeting new entrants, Edward confirmed that the FCTU Office had a process for

contacting and following up all new staff, and said that this already included local representatives.

The number of FTA staff was discussed and it was agreed that another recruitment push for FTAs was needed. It was noted however that FTA and STTA staff made up only 5% of staff numbers. It was agreed that highlighting completion of probation as a potential need for union representation could encourage them to join.

The group agreed that they needed to start with a baseline mapping of all members so that all non-members could be targeted. It was noted that GMB, PCS and Prospect all agreed to share information to facilitate the mapping of members in the aim of producing a list of non-members in local areas to reps. It was hoped that Unite members would be able to sign up to this mapping process.

Action Required: ALL to provide this information to the FCTU office by the end of next week if possible for inclusion in the next Core Group meeting (November 12th).

6. TUPE

Robert advised that some staff are facing the possibility of redundancy whilst the work that they are doing is contracted out and whether TUPE applies or not. He said that FC lawyers have been involved and that the Unite legal division is now looking into the situation further. It was thought with the facts available that TUPE would apply.

7. AOB

7.1 Scottish Forest District Review

Lorraine requested an update on the process and outcomes of the FD review due to a Prospect member's discontent.

Allan reported that the number of FDs have changed from 14 to 10; Moray has been combined with Aberdeenshire; Lorne and Fort Augustus have been removed and Ae has been amalgamated with Scottish Borders. Allan said that there will be no compulsory redundancies and that any staff members who have lost their role will be retrained and redeployed.

It was noted that all staff members were invited to meet with FCTU Scotland twice to feed their views into the process. Allan said that there are now 10 districts/areas run centrally from 10 main offices with an administrative hub for each area.

7.2 Nominations for FCTU Secretary

One nomination was received - Allan MacKenzie by PCS. This nomination will be put forward to the Council in October.

It was noted that the constitution changes as suggested at the August Core Group were received without comment and will be issued to the council.

7.3 Staff Survey

Allan reported that the working group had met and that management wish to keep the majority of the questions the same as in the previous survey as a guide to whether staff still feel the same, with some additional questions. Allan said that he had put forward 5 questions for inclusion with the survey and that management are considering them.

8. Date of Next Meeting

It was confirmed that the next meeting will be held on 12th November 2008 in Silvan House.