

open. People were also keen to get a wider diversity of representation on the NOC especially from the female element of the Unions. The role of the secretary was discussed. This can be a dedicated role and an extra member of the Committee. At the present time Julie is acting in dual role as secretary and as an elected member of the NOC. At the present time Julie is happy for this to continue.

At the present time the constitution states the following make up of the NOC:

PCS x 4, TGWU x 4, Prospect x 2, GMB x 1

PCS members are:

Mick Hoban
Julie Saunders
Martin Johnston
John Winterbourne

TGWU members are:

Tim Gill
Tim Medlock
John Broatch

Prospect:

Crispin Thorn
Steve Smith
Ron Melville (with two of the three attending)

The TGWU are one member down and Tim is going see if he can locate a willing volunteer to attend. **Action T Gill**

b) FCTU

At the present time Tim Gill is the TGWU and NOC member on the FCTU. There is an opportunity for the NOC to have another member on this committee. Tim was happy to continue but if ever a voting situation arose then the NOC would lose a vote. Robert stated that it would be better to have another NOC member. Crispin suggested that a member could attend when voting duties were needed as there are a large number of meetings in everyone's diaries. John Winterbourne said he would fulfil the role but he would attend the first meeting then send apologies until a vote was needed. Mick offered his support and would try and attend if John could not go.

5. **Differential grading of England Landscape Architects**

Crispin said that he had discussed with Martin Johnston concerns raised surrounding the grading of recent Landscape Architect post which had

been trawled at PB5 level. This gives rise to Landscape Architects appearing to be graded at 3 different pay bands across FC England and it was important to understand the rationale as to the grading. It was suggested that they should have different titles i.e. Senior Landscape Architect, Landscape Architect and Assistant Landscape Architect to clarify the roles and responsibilities.

This then lead on to the times needed for getting a response back to management. Management are sending out trawls with a short consultation time limit. Tim Gill also mentioned that Ken Milsom seemed to be bypassing the system in place by contacting him direct rather than going through the secretary. This was unacceptable and all trawls should be sent to the secretary for distribution.

Action Tim Gill to put forward a 10 working day consultation period for all trawls. Crispin said it was important that management understand that we are all FC employees doing part time union roles and it was therefore critical that adequate time was given to enable effective consultation

Tim Gill said that Ken Milsom was thinking about getting together a small working group to look at how the information is passed to the TUS side. It was thought that this was unacceptable and that Ken should put forward a paper on his proposed consultation changes for consideration of the staff council. Edward and Robert could then take up a whole GB issue. It is also important that the TUS should produce papers for discussion in the specified time.

Crispin raised the issue of a staffing strategy. He highlighted the fact that mixed messages appeared to be coming forward between difficulties in remaining within a funding settlement that has no provision for inflation and the apparent continued creation of new posts. It was therefore inappropriate to consider new posts in isolation but we should be considering whether the organisation has the skills and abilities that meet the challenges being set by our changing working environment. A staffing strategy would help identify the way forward in terms of the organisations human resources. **Action Tim Gill** to gain clarification off Ken Milsom.

6. Forestry as a career

Crispin raised the issue that concerns had been raised over the number of people taking up forestry as a career. It was believed that there had been a general tail off in the number of students taking up forestry and how could the TUS help promote a more positive side to forestry. The Forestry Commission has always been the first choice of employer but might not be so now. The FC seems to be trawling more and more from outside instead of giving the existing staff a chance of staff development via training. **Action:** It was agreed that this would be put forward as a GB issue. Robert to check with Edward over numbers to see if there is actually a decline in numbers. Crispin to take forward after clarification from Edward.

7. Increasing number of TRA over 6 months

A number of members of staff have been on TRAs for over the agreed 6-month period and management are not consulting with the TUS to extend these. Examples were given of people being on TRA for four and a half years which is unacceptable. Robert said that the Wales NOC had raised this issue and the issue had steadily improved there. Management needs to follow the procedures that they have laid down.

Action: to be raised as an AOB at the Joint England Staff Council meeting on 30th November with Paul Hill Tout. Mick suggested we ask for a list of current TRA with a time on them to when they re likely to end. **Action:** to be added as a standing agenda item for the NOC and JSC

8. Confirmation of SC/NOC/PE members

9. Clarification of names of meetings

10. Confirmation of number of meetings and times

Some confusion had arisen with the names being given to meetings, who was a member of which and how many were to be held. These were discussed around Ken Milsom's paper 01/05. Tim Gill said that Paul was keen to have a united FC face as all issues were relevant to all staff. There would be benefits from a single SC as it would provide a positive way forward, but there was concern that a number of members on the current FA/FE staff councils would be lost. There would be the option to co-opt members onto the SC as well as the NOC to ensure fair representation. **Action:** it was agreed that the Unions would need time to talk to members about this issue. Tim Gill **agreed** to write to management with the outcome of these discussions.

Tim proposed that there should be 3 meetings of the SC and it was proposed that the NOC should tie in with this. Crispin raised concerns over the time being taken out of people diaries, as it would be two full days with travelling. A suggested possible solution was to travel in the p.m. of one day, have a meeting in the evening or early a.m. then SC in the p.m. The issues raised at the NOC would be put forward to the next SC or if urgent AOB. Robert said that the key was to ensure that business is done properly and in a way that suits all. It was important that diary dates for meeting in 2006 were issued as soon as possible. Dates would be issued for February, June and October so papers could be issued and dates kept clear. Could always cancel if nothing to be discussed.

The issue was raised on the time being given for the issue of papers and the time that was being allowed for discussion. Papers for the this SC had been issued on Monday afternoon and a lot of people were out of the office so hadn't had time to see the papers. **Action:** request management to send out papers with 10 working days notice. Important that TUS also delivers any papers for discussion in that time frame. This will allow for people to be prepared and business issues progressed.

11. Office accommodation Sherwood

Tim Medlock raised this issue. Staff levels have risen in Sherwood and the office is no longer big enough for all the staff so have been placed into Portakabins. The temperature range had been from 5 to 44 degrees. However an office extension has just been approved so should alleviate the problem. Crispin had similar issues with the Wheldrake Office and that this was a good example of how a JSC would be beneficial as we can all learn and share experiences.

12. AOB

Mick raised the issue of corporate identity. Paul was keen to have single delivery unit the FC but Richard Britton had various title Head of FA, Head of Region and FA. Do we still need to use the FA/FE definitions. We need to be clear of when to use and where. FC to external bodies and FA/FE to clarify internal activities. **Action:** to be raised as AOB and JSC 30/11/05

Crispin raised the issue of how we manage ourselves. We need to manage our workloads as we are full time FC employees first and TUS reps on part time basis. Important that we utilise Edward, Sue and Fiona at Silvan House. **Action:** Robert to raise at Core Group Meeting.

13. Date of next meeting

Diary dates are being collected for a meeting in February.