

Forestry as a career

This had been passed to GBSC. It was proposed that there should be more educational visits to schools and colleges to give forestry a higher profile. Apprenticeships had been a success where they had taken place. Martin raised the point that concerns had been raised as they were in a FTA and that people would leave after this time and the FC would lose good workers if they could not be kept on.

6. Increasing number of TRA over 6 months.

It was agreed to have this as a standing ESC agenda item to ensure that the TRA's did not over run without good reason. There is a paper 08/06 at the ESC produced by Ken Milsom to be discussed. Concerns were raised over what appeared to be a break in procedure where TRA's were being used as a way for progression. Crispin felt that it was good that some of the longer TRA had been resolved but was still concerned at the length of some of the remaining ones. It was felt that a TRA over 3 years was unacceptable.

Action. HR in England to be raised at the ESC.

Confirmation of SC/NOC/PE members

Former FCSC and FESC members had been contacted to see if any would like to be involved. Simon James would like to be involved and Mick had spoken to Dick Gossling who would also like to be kept informed.

Action. Add Dick onto NOC distribution list. Simon already on.

5. TUS Consultation

Steve Smith had been part of a working group which looked at TUS Consultation to produce a document to outline procedures. This paper is paper 10 at the ESC. Crispin said that the paper had been well discussed and it was proposed that the TUS accept the paper with a review after 12 months. Mick felt that this was a major advance in this area and thanked those involved in the working group. Edward was happy to support and he pointed out that Malcolm Crosby was doing an exercise to compare England, Scotland and Wales's documents. He also pointed out that it would be illegal to recruit graduates from October 06 will the new Age Discrimination law coming in.

6. Pay

Tim updated everyone on the current situation on pay. The TUS has had opening talks with the OS which had gone well. The OS were still waiting to hear from Treasury as to what the pay package would be made up of. Part of the discussion was to have the TP bonus as a fixed amount rather than a percentage of salary. The max. of each scale would be treated the same as this was becoming a constant erosion of staffs pensions.

7. Post Grading

There had been a recent notice out to but 3 FDM's up to PB2. It was felt that they should have to go through a formal Jags process. Also concerns were raised over the forth coming efficiency review and how this would

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affect these posts. Would it be worth waiting until after the review before taking action.

Action. Raise at ESC.

There was also concern over the same jobs being put at different pay bands e.g. Ops managers at PB4 and 3. It was felt that the FC should benchmark jobs with those of similar jobs working for other bodies. Edward raised the point that there is a clear difference between salaries within the FC and outside bodies but HR seem to be unwilling to accept this. There had also been a lot of new posts created in recent months and concerns were raised whether this is appropriate with the forthcoming review.

8. Choices

It would appear that this has been an expensive exercise for very little. In England only 40 people took up any of the benefits. Edward said that 130 people in GB had taken out some Choices and 80 of those were childcare. The Chancellors budget did have an impact on some of the benefits available. It has cost a lot of money to set up. There had been 65 road shows with facilitators and cost in FC staff time to attend. In principle it is a good idea but benefits actually need to be of some use to the staff.

9. Smoking at Work

Smoking is banned in public places in Scotland and is proposed to be introduced in England and Wales next year. Emily Ramsey had produced a paper which outlined 2 options continue with current policy until next year or change policy to bring in the ban with immediate effect. It was agreed that the TUS would offer their support to bring in an immediate ban. Steve H said that it would be good if the FC could offer support to those members of staff that smoked to quit.

10. Disposals

Edwin had asked Edward to raise this issue. The TUS had been supplied with a list of land areas and locations for disposal but not a detailed list.

Action. To ask for a detailed list at ESC.

11. Relations with Defra/CCSU

Edward had sent out a paper regarding a review that had been done post Haskins. There had been talks between Defra, FC and Kew which would involve FC and Kew being taken in with Defra. It was felt that the TUS should keep in contact with the developments and Mick and Tim said that they would be happy to do with Edward as a lead role.

12. FC England Review

There did not appear to be anything relating to the review as an agenda item for the ESC. It was decided to ask Simon and Richard for a briefing on how FA/FE reviews were going. It was felt it was important to keep all staff briefed on the review as it had the potential to have an impact on a large number of staff. Many felt that at this time it would not have an impact and staff would only become more active once the proposals had

become more tangible to them and their current situation. Mick raised the issue of having the minutes put on the intranet and for NOC members to make people that they are available. Tim had produced a paper on feedback that he had had. The main feedback was a preference for option B rather than D.

8. AOB

Alice Holt Shop Closure

It would appear that there were no union members involved in this. However there had been no formal meeting with the TUS to discuss these proposed changes. This should have been put in writing to the TUS as it involves redundancies.

Action. Ken Milsom to write formally to Edward.

10. Date of next meeting

24th January 2007 ESC 25th January 2007