



**MINUTES OF THE FOREST RESEARCH NATIONAL ORGANISING COMMITTEE
HELD ON 6TH JULY 2006 BY VIDEO CONFERENCE**

Present:	Joan Webber	Chair, Prospect
	Rory Cobb	PCS
	Steve Osborne	PCS
	Dave Watterson	PCS
	Glenn Brearley	Prospect
	Robert Matthews	Prospect
	Edward Shephard	FCTU Secretary
	Lorraine Adams	Prospect
Minute Secretary:	Ian Tubby	Prospect

1. Alice Holt Site Redevelopment/Relocation

ES suggested that most of the rumours that had been heard had elements of truth in them. The CE prepared a report on options for the Alice Holt site, which was rejected by the Commissioners. The Non Executive Commissioners (NEC's) have been made aware of their responsibilities and so far have taken an interest in Pay and Alice Holt.

A sub group was set up last December to look at the options that are available for AH. It is so far unclear where they are on the report. But now the whole scenario is on hold pending the outcome of the FR Framework document, which is to be published around Christmas.

The Chairman and DG seem to be guided by the wishes of the NEC's, is there any scope for clarifying the role and responsibilities of NEC's and hence request that the DG enforce these roles.

ACTION: A letter is to written to the DG to request: information regarding the roles of NEC's, feedback the status of the AH site review, and what board members roles may be in this process.

2. TSU Restructuring Including Nursery and Workshop

The negotiations regarding the restructuring seemed to have concluded, however workshop managers are to discuss the workshop review.

ACTION: RC to send copy of report of workshop restructuring to GB.

Since the restructuring there is an over subscription of work being requested of the TSU particularly during the summer months and it was questioned if this was taken into account during the negotiations considering all decisions were based solely on projections from the 2005/2006 figures, rather than accurate predictions for 2006/7 as planned by project leaders. It is the project leader who are now complaining about having to wait for help! The ability of TSU members to take holiday during this period is also being questioned.

ACTION: FR NOC to go back to members to find out more accurate information regarding requests for work this summer.

ACTION: FR NOC to write to Janet Dutch to get further clarification over the benchmark figures used for this review and whether the next year's projected workload was taken into consideration.

3. Review of Staff on Temporary Responsibility Allowance.

The FR NOC should be allowed to review how many staff are of TRA and for how long. Precedent has already been set for this by other FC wide NOC's who are freely given this information.

ACTION: FR NOC to ask Ken Charles for access to this information immediately and as and when it changes.

4. Review of Promotion Procedures

The unsatisfactory review of the promotion procedures was discussed. The review group (Peter Freer Smith, Ken Charles and Andy Moffat) presented their changes to the FREB where the revisions were accepted, the paper was then presented to the FR NOC for TU consultation. JW, IT and GB met to discuss the revisions and produced a document for other NOC and union members to comment upon. The comments were fed back to Ken Charles by IT, the main items for concern was the fact that fluid grading would only apply to Pay bands 5 and above, that there was still quite a high emphasis on peer reviewed papers and that the HOD still had governing say over the suitability of the candidate. This last point was highly debated as some HOD scarcely interact with some of their staff and it was thought that line managers were a better judge of a persons performance. It was also mentioned that it was the belief of members that management had "quotas" given to them before interviews commenced.

Although there was debate the TU came to no agreement with management over these points. It was requested by the TU that management use previous guidelines for the 2006 boards so that a proper review in consultation with the TU side could commence. This was rejected, however it was suggested that the effectiveness of the boards could be assessed after the fact but there was no agreement that changes could then be made to the guidelines at this stage.

It was decided that the FR NOC could do no more to negotiate on this without consulting members opinions as to the new guidelines.

ACTION: FR NOC to write to all members and request feedback on the new guidelines as imposed by management.

5. Status of Staff councils and Role of the FR NOC

NRS have a fully functioning Staff council, which meets twice a year with Chris Quine as NRS station manager. The AH staff council has ceased to exist since the position of Chair was vacated by Tracy Houston, Norman Day has also since left. There have been no meeting within this time and as such there is now some underlying confusion regarding the difference in the roles of a Staff Council and the FR NOC.

IT said that the FR NOC had been "sold" to him as a less intense union role, which then became very involved with the TSU restructuring.

ES explained that the FR NOC was simply an organisational level used to guide the

Staff councils but had no remit to discuss anything with management. Staff councils are the told with which to consult with management. The format is generally that the NOC's meet with the members of the staff council prior to Staff council meetings to ensure that all relevant issues are flagged up in the meetings. This relies on a sufficient number of volunteers!

ACTION: It was decided that the FR NOC would write to the members to explain the differences between the roles of the NOC and the Staff Council and ask for volunteers for Chair and council members for the AH Staff council. This should then lead to the reformation of a Joint staff council for issues that affect both NRS and AH. This role is currently being managed by the members NRS Staff council.

6. Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting will be held by video conference on Thursday 28th September.