



**MEETING OF NATIONAL ORGANISING COMMITTEE FOR SCOTLAND, 5TH JULY 2006
TAY ANNEX, INVER**

Present:	Malcolm Crosby	Chair, PCS
	Gordon Donaldson	PCS
	Andy Chadwick	PCS
	David Robertson	PCS
	Alastair Gillies	GMB
	James McDonald	GMB
	Fiona Barnett	PCS
	Graham Coupar	TGWU
	Liz Stewart	PCS
	Colin Watret	TGWU
	Jim Seaton	PCS
	Brian Duff	PCS
	Alan MacKenzie	PCS
	Gordon Ferguson	PCS
	Jeff Dymond	TGWU
Minute Secretary:	Peter Fullarton	Secretary, PCS
Apologies:	Edward Shephard,	TUS Secretary
	Robert Beaney	TGWU
	Roddy MacLeod	PCS
	Donald McNeill	Prospect
	Ashley Woodhouse	PCS
	James McDonald	GMB
	Jim Lauder	PCS

1. Introduction

Malcolm welcomed all to Inver.

2. Apologies

As above.

3. Minutes of Last Meeting

Agreed.

4. Election of NOC Members

The following were elected to the NOC (Scotland):-
NOC Chair Malcolm Crosby, PCS
NOC Secretary Peter Fullarton, PCS

Ashley Woodhouse, PCS
Colin Watret, TGWU
Graham Coupar, TGWU
Hazel MacLean, PCS
Donald McNeill, Prospect
James McDonald, GMB
Jeff Dymond, TGWU

Co-opted:-

Alasdair Gillies, GMB (BU NOC)
Gordon Donaldson, PCS
David A Robertson, PCS
Gordon Kennedy, PCS
Steve Osborne, PCS (FR NOC)
Fiona Barnett, PCS
Liz Stewart, PCS
Brian Duff, PCS
Jim Seaton, PCS
Andy Chadwick, PCS

Appointments from the Committee:-

Staff Council Vice-chair (FCS) Malcolm Crosby, PCS
Staff Council Vice-chair (Conservancies & HO) David A Robertson, PCS
Staff Council Vice-chair (FES) Gordon Donaldson, PCS
FCTU Council Rep Peter Fullarton, PCS
H & S Co-ordinator James McDonald, GMB
Learning Co-ordinator Fiona Barnett, PCS

5. Matters Arising From Last Meeting

a) Review of Operations Review:

Gordon Donaldson, as TUS rep on the review, gave details of the intended timetable and membership. Members were 'representing areas of interest' rather than acting as individuals and would be expected to consult with others, sub-groups would look at specific topics, reporting back to the main group. PB6a Works Supervisors would be involved at sub-group level.

To answer the question as to how the process could have been improved, Gordon had pointed out that involving the TUS in the working group set up before the steering group would have increased the level of involvement, as that was where options were examined. Reporting on the effectiveness or otherwise of the past year will be taken as the starting point of the review. Management aware of the need to look at the Ops/Planning interface as a 'systems' issue and a sub-group has been set up to look at this.

The review is to report by November 2006 and notes of all meetings will be published on the intranet.

http://alpacorn.forestry.gov.uk:7777/portal/page?_pageid=33.819693&_dad=portal&_schema=PORTAL

There are difficulties in finding direct comparisons with previous years figures and costs especially since the original estimates are 'not replicable'.

Possible career path problems - 'ghettoisation' - have also been recognised.

A round-table report from the districts present revealed similar problems; heavy workloads, lack of staff and/or resources. A 'them/us' split between Ops and Planning was a worry in some districts. Positives included better inter-district co-operation in the west and a 'better than before' view in Kincardine. Centralised arrangements for SRP and despatching across Operations areas is increasing.

b) Pay 2006

The joint pay claim has been published. It is as simple as possible. The 2005 pay campaign and subsequent action has been suspended. 2006 discussions have been amicable so far and if promises are continued into negotiations, we should not remain in dispute.

c) Conservancy Issues

Two planned Staff Councils have been cancelled by James Ogilvie. Several outstanding issues need to be tackled including SFGS and the 'On the Ground' Initiative. David Robertson will try to fix a date for a meeting in the near future.

i) SFGS

Closed because of lack of funds. Serious knock-on effects for Conservancy staff and private sector so should have been raised at a Staff Council. Funding issue likely to persist into next grant scheme.

ii) 'On the Ground' Initiative

Poor communication from Management - even to offices that could be directly involved. Linked issue of 'Single Payment Agency' had been raised at the previous Staff Council. GLADE is still rolling out in England and it is hoped that all issues will be resolved before Scotland begins. Concerns regarding integration with SEERAD family organisations. Although newsletters are issued regularly, there has been no TUS involvement in this process so far.

d) Closure of the Durris Office

Initial notification of the proposed merger arrangements did not mention consultation. MC informed FDM of necessary procedures. Kincardine staff accept the need for change after amalgamation but feel that little thought had been given to the long-term implications at Kincardine and lack of local consultation will result in missed opportunities e.g. potential office share in Banchory with SNH and SEPA. A Local Staff Council has been arranged soon and GD will attend in his role as FES Chair.

6. Health and Safety Issues

The accident statistics from 2005 were discussed at the recent Departmental Staff Council. Management are not being complacent despite no rise in accidents. There is a feeling that incidents to groups other than PB6 and PB7 may be under-reported as flexible working can allow recovery from minor accidents while working at home and this is easier for higher pay bands. Accidents to members of the public, particularly on mountain bikes, are causing concern to staff and considerable additional work.

7. Any Other Urgent Business

a) Consultation on Trawls and TRA

Malcolm had recently had a complaint regarding an extension to a TRA that he had approved. TRA of less than 6 months is authorised by management without TUS consultation, which is only necessary for a longer period. He recapped that (as agreed at a previous NOC) he receives notification of all trawls/TRAs and responds himself unless further information is required, when he involves Gordon Donaldson or David Robertson as Staff Council Chairs. If centrally agreed procedures are satisfied by the detail provided, these are unlikely to be challenged, the main concern being to ensure that TRA is not being used to unnecessarily delay filling the post permanently. MC asked whether the Committee are still content with this system. SNOC agreed that the current system is the preferred option.

Earlier in 2006 MC met with Jean Lindsay of HR and agreed a protocol for TUS consultation on postfilling. The system is working much better for both sides as a result.

b) Fchoices

Poor take-up of the scheme was noted. There was no enthusiasm for the scheme amongst those present.

c) Galloway FD Home to Office Travel

Local Staff Council is dealing with this as a leftover from previous FD amalgamations.

d) D&IS Staff, Silvan House

5 D&IS staff from Silvan House have been offered voluntary relocation to Inverness to free up space. Only one person is taking up the offer. MC queried why other relocation options, such as Dumfries, where there are already MGIU staff, were not included.

8. Date of Next Meeting

27th September, 2006 at **9.30am** in Inver. **Please note earlier time.**