



**WALES NOC MEETING
30TH AUGUST 2007
WELSHPOOL**

Present:	Antony Griffiths	PCS (Chair)
	Chris Edwards	PCS
	Barbara Anglezarke	Prospect
	Chris Tucker	T&G
Minute Secretary:	Rhian Evans	PCS
Apologies:	Paul Finch	PCS
	Mike Kennett	T&G
	Edward Shephard	TUS Secretary
	Mathew Park	PCS
	Andy Phillips	T&G
	Kath McNulty	PCS

3. Minutes of Last Meeting

Accepted as a true and accurate record.

4. Matters Arising from Last Meeting

a) CAPES

This was raised at the Staff Council meeting. Clarification regarding the qualifying rules for CAPES has not yet been received. It was confirmed that the FC's contribution is a flat rate for **all** vehicles. There are, however, tax implication, where the tax for some 4x4's and cars is far higher than for many other vehicle types. Therefore, this does in fact mean that the FC can sometimes be contributing towards a member of staff having a vehicle that emits more CO₂ per mile than many other vehicles.

There is also a link between CAPES vehicles and the Environmental Strategy.

e) Assessment Centres

This has been raised at the Staff Council meeting, but no criteria has as yet been set. However, the Wales MB has said that Assessment Centres are likely to be used for posts that involve the management of large Teams, such as a Forest District. There is a new recruitment process being looked at across FC GB as part of the FC Staffing Strategy.

f) FC Choices

Barbara Anglezarke, Chris Tucker and Kath McNulty have been invited by FC Wales HR to a 'Choices' Meeting. However, it is unclear as to the purpose of the meeting, other than the expectation that it would be to discuss how the

scheme could be improved to offer more to Union Members and other FC staff.

g) District Level TU/Management meetings

There are meetings in England which are called 'Local Staff Council Meetings'. There was concern that the name of these groups/meetings were inappropriate, though their intended purpose was welcomed. It was felt that regular meetings with Cost Centre Managers would be hugely beneficial and useful to discuss day to day issues that could help solve problems at a local level without the need for escalation to NOC's and Staff Councils'. It was agreed that FC Wales should encourage 'all Union' reps to engage in regular 'local' meetings with Cost Centre Managers from the various business Units, Districts, etc.

ACTION: Chris Tucker to write a note for reps.

h) Diversity Working Group

Barbara Anglezarke suggested that information on the group's terms of reference be made available to staff and how staff are able to get onto the group.

ACTION: Raise at Staff Council

5) Health & Safety

There are now named reps for most offices/business units. Chris Tucker will arrange a training course for those who require it. Incidents/accidents need to be shared in order to identify potential patterns, but this isn't happening at the moment for fear of embarrassing people. However, lessons need to be shared and learned from. Lone Worker Systems are being researched at the moment. Chris Tucker is going to a H&S meeting in Edinburgh.

6) New Assembly Building

Chris Edwards is now the Senior Officer for this – he has suggested that there is a need to move to a new way of working. Desktop printers will in general disappear, there being a central printer/photocopier that codes can be used for confidential/sensitive document retrieval. There would be benefits in implementing this now rather than after the move.

7) Communication

Staffing issues – rumours can spread like a virus if staff are not informed about changes at the most appropriate opportunity. However, choosing the right time is not as easy as it sounds! During the recent changes within the Policy Team, discussions were held with those directly affected, but this wasn't communicated wider to all staff before the 'rumour mill' took hold. Staff affected were told first, for obvious reasons, then perhaps the information should have been shared with all other staff at the earliest opportunity to stop the 'rumour mill' dead before it took hold. It was agreed that there was a need to clarify if there was a strategy in place that covered internal communications.

ACTION: Antony.

8) Job Trawls, New Posts and FTA's

There is perceived that Lewis Edwards' post as Welfare Officer won't be replaced. This is an essential post, and it is felt that it is essential that there is a successor whom is a Welsh speaker.

ACTION: Raise at Staff Council

The recent trawl for the Territorial Liaison Officer, MES based at Welshpool was discussed. There was concern that this job, which affected FC Wales staff, was not shown to the Union's prior to it being trawled. It appears that as it is an MES trawl FC Wales Union's were not informed, which is normally the case for jobs not directly involving FC Wales' staff. However, this post does indeed impact on the management of FC Wales' staff. There was also concern that the job specification included additional duties, to that of the previous post holder, and thus it was unclear if this post was correctly loaded, i.e. what, if anything, had been dropped?

There are a number of FTA's at the moment. The problem with this is that people, inevitably, end up leaving as the posts near the end of their term. While there are a number of clear reasons for making some posts FTA's, i.e. for short term funded projects, there is perhaps a need to think more carefully about the impact that this can sometimes cause to ensure that projects are managed and completed on time.

There too are a number of TRA's that have been running past the normal 6 month time period.

ACTION: Ask for clarification/update at Staff Council

9) Line Management Reporting

The question was raised as to whether or not a Line Manager has the right to prevent a member of staff applying for a post? If a member of staff does try, and the Line Manager is un-supportive, does/can this affect the individual's chances? Staff should be aware that they have the right to appeal against a Line Managers decision if they do not agree with what has been said.

Line Managers shouldn't criticise staff, they should be open and truthful, but they can choose not to support an application if they can provide constructive reasoning.

If the PMS Process is being implemented correctly then there shouldn't be any comments from Line Managers that an individual person isn't already aware of.

10) Management Postings

Kath met with Clare Lewis following the last Staff Council Meeting to discuss Management Posting issues. Management do have the right to make decisions on level transfer Management Postings. However, most Members see these as lost 'job development opportunities' and additionally see this as conflicting with, in part, some of the FC 'Values'. It was agreed that we would ask Management if there was a 'framework' for management postings?

ACTION: Raise at Staff Council

11) Graduate Recruitment Scheme

Some members feel that too much time/attention is being given to the new FC Graduate Recruitment Scheme members. It is felt that if current staff were given similar attention for development opportunities then some may show specific qualities ideal to higher-grade management posts. Staff should

understand that specifically individual countries do not fund the current Graduate Recruitment Scheme, the funding coming from a central 'pot'. Furthermore all staff are entitled to discuss career development and opportunities with their line manager, which could lead to a course of action. Obviously any desires have to fit in to the needs of the business and any individual would have to be assessed as a suitable candidate.

12) Modern Apprenticeship Scheme

A discussion took place about the possibility and benefits of such a scheme could help to address and resolve the issues of lost skills at the Forest Craftsman level. It could be that young people could be given an apprenticeship to work alongside Forest Craftsman with a view to some of these apprentices taking up posts when a member of staff retires or leaves.

ACTION: Raise at Staff Council

13) Pay 2007

We understand that both the Welsh and Scottish Ministers have cleared the Management remit. The English Minister was not expected to look at it until at least the 20th August. Assuming it is also approved by them it then has to get passed HMT. That is the position as we understand it at this present time. The current threat of Local Regional Pay was also discussed, but until there is more information available it isn't possible to comment further, other than there are clear concerns if Government try introducing this policy. Concerns were also raised that allowances and overtime needs applying consistently as it appears some staff are receiving overtime and others are not. A number of members have again recently expressed concerns about the 'benefits and rewards' statement sent out to staff implying that a pension and salary is part of a reward and benefit. Members most certainly do not see this as such and furthermore find the implication rather insulting.

ACTION: Raise/discuss at Staff Council

14) Staffing Plan Update

The staffing plan was sent out to all shortly after it was drafted. It is not yet on the intranet, however John Williams will suggest this at the next staffing plan meeting. If you have deleted your copy please ask your line manager for a new one.

15) Subsistence Claim for Motorbikes

It was raised again that some members felt that 24p per mile for motorbikes is deemed inadequate, when the rate for bicycles is 20p per mile.

ACTION: To be passed to Edward Shephard

Next Staff Council meeting: 24th September 2007. Participants will be Antony Griffiths, Chris Tucker.

Next NOC meeting: 20th November 2007, Welshpool Office