



**WALES NOC MEETING
20th November 2007
WELSHPOOL**

Present:	Antony Griffiths	PCS (Chair)
	Paul Finch	PCS
	John Williams	UNITE
	Chris Tucker	UNITE
	Rhian Evans	PCS (deputising for Chris E.)
	Mathew Park	PCS
	Andy Phillips	UNITE
	Rosalind Wornell	Prospect
Minute Secretary:	Kath McNulty	PCS
Apologies:	Chris Edwards	PCS
	Barbara Anglezarke	Prospect

1. Minutes of Last Meeting

Accepted as a true and accurate record.

2. Matters Arising from Last Meeting

g) District Level TU/Management meetings

ACTION: Kath to send Chris Tucker list of PCS workplace reps
Chris to write a note for reps and send out.

15. Subsistence Claim for Motorbikes: Discharged.

items h), 8, 10, 12, 13 will be raised at Staff Council.

f) Diversity Working Group

Barbara Anglezarke suggested that information should be made available to staff such as the group's terms of reference and the process for becoming a member.

ACTION: Raise at Staff Council

3. Antony's report from his meeting with Acting Director Trefor Owen

Financial position

Trefor reported that there had been some adjustments in our draft settlement over the last few months, but we are now in a position where our baseline for the next 3 years is proposed to be the same as our current level of £22.533M. This is a slight improvement from early summer, but it's still tight.

Staffing issues

Management needs to manage those staff coming off funded projects and secondments back into the core business of FCW. Staff whom are permanent need to be found a position and it is always possible that they could be management posted into a role that becomes vacant, negating the potential open trawl of some posts.

ACTION: Kath to prepare a note to be sent to all Members explaining this clearly

The recent MES post in Welshpool was raised as a concern that the post holder would have line management responsibilities for Coed y Gororau (CyG) Forest District staff. MES has a GB remit and there was concern that some decision making may not be appropriate for staff within FCW. In addition to this because MES is largely out-with FCW management the job trawl was not made available to the Union Trawl vetting group. This meant that those staff affected in CyG didn't know anything about the planned changes until the job was listed on the Intranet via HR Opportunities. Lack of appropriate communication with and between staff was clearly an issue here. However, Trefor was not concerned by this and actually felt that there could be some advantages, though none were discussed. It was suggested by Trefor that perhaps the Wales NOC and the MES NOC should improve our communication with the MES NOC. The Union's felt that this may not be best way to find out this type of information and that this is more do with our own Managers needing to follow the correct procedures.

Land agency delivery is going to be reviewed. Gwen Thomas' post was jessed, however, the outcome of this is now on hold pending the review. It was agreed that the TUS should ask for a timetable for the review and Terms of Reference for the review.

ACTION: Staff Council

Trefor emphasised his keenness to work with the TU side. He would like to continue holding informal meetings with the Union's and maintain the level of communication developed with Ian Forshaw.

As Acting Director, Trefor is keen for the Director post to be trawled as soon as possible, he does not want our temporary situation to continue longer than necessary.

ACTION: Edward to update us on trawl progress on a regular basis.

4. Update of staffing plan

Staffing action plan has been delayed. The intention is to integrate it with the Business Plan as affordability is a big issue. Once key posts have been agreed (the delay was caused by the information being provided by unit managers in a variety of formats) there will no longer be a requirement to produce business cases for every post that becomes available. This would guarantee that we stop losing key posts as senior managers will be signed up to the process.

The NOC was disappointed that none of the unit managers drawing up the key post list discussed their proposals with the TU side. The process is shrouded in secrecy.

ACTION: Raise at Staff council

5. Post Filling

ACTION: Chris Tucker to write to Trefor this week raising the commitment at the Staff Council to trawl any new posts, our understanding is some of these new posts are being management posted.

6. Contact Centre

Changes have been made, but with no consultation with TU. What is the plan? Do Agency staff cost more? It will take time to understand the organisational structure of FCW, but by the very nature of utilising Agency staff this doesn't imply a long-term commitment to the Contact Centre. So is FCW commitment to the Contact Centre reducing (?) and is it still delivering what Management want and expect it to deliver?

ACTION: Raise at Staff Council

7. MES

Managers met 2 weeks ago to discuss way forward on options. However staff have not been told of the decision (if any). A meeting was set-up between Management and Union Reps to discuss the current position.

ACTION: Raise at Staff Council

8. Pay

The Management Board has now received approval from HM Treasury for our proposed pay remit. As perhaps expected the offer was way below the Unions Pay Claim. Discussion were now taking place between the two sides to try and find common ground and an acceptable pay offer that was deemed realistic to put forward to Members. No doubt these negotiations will be extremely challenging. The TUS has asked the Management Board to seek

extra funding from Treasury given that The Forestry Commission has been working on a flat line budget for as long as we can remember. And each year our increase has been self funded through efficiency savings

9. Workloads

It is wide concern that many staff has an increasing workload as resources continue to be stretched in many parts of FCW. It is important that staff have an agreed FJP that is accepted by both the Line Manager and the job holder. If new work is asked of jobholders then this must be added to an individuals FJP, and more importantly agreed. Management must monitor the work of their staff to ensure that excessive hours and unrealistic workloads do not develop.

ACTION: Raise at staff council as an issue to be aware of.

10. GIS posts

In Wales, GIS roles are not being valued at the right grade. They are consistently seen at higher paybands in England and Scotland, generally at 6a rather than 6b as in FCW. It is time to raise this again with FCW Management. Antony has collected job descriptions elsewhere to justify the concerns of staff in FCW and this need to be shared with Management with the intention of seeking a review of all GIS related posts in FCW. Further to this clarification of the JEGS results for the Clawdd jobs should be sought.

ACTION: Raise at Staff Council

Next Meeting – 15th January 2008 at Welshpool Office, Coed y Gororau Forest District