

FCTU WALES COMMITTEE MEETING
26th August 2009, 10.00 – 15.00
COED Y GORORAU FOREST DISTRICT, WELSHPOOL

1. Present: Antony Griffiths (AG), PCS, Chair
Paul Finch (PF), PCS
StJohn Ashworth (SA), PCS
Chris Edwards (CE), PCS
Barbara Anglezarke (BA), Prospect
Chris Tucker (CT), UNITE
Mike Kennett (MK), UNITE

2. Apologies: John Williams (Unite)
Andy Phillips (Unite)
Rhian Evans (PCS)
Eric Williams (Unite)

3. Minutes of Last meeting – 27.5.09

Accepted as an accurate record.

4. Matters Arising

a. Flexible Management Document – still to be received from HR – AG to pursue.

b. H&S – meeting date for FCTU safety reps with Peter Garson has been deferred due to lack of response. It's unclear who the current reps are, and there appears to be a reluctance to take this on – possibly because the nature of the role is unclear and a perception that line managers won't be supportive. Training and line managers' support is vital. All accident reports need to have FCTU H&S rep comments, so the role is essential.

ACTIONS

- AG to discuss the possibility of a joint letter going out from PG and AG to Unit Managers about importance, role and training available for H&S reps, emphasising the availability of and right to Facility Time to do this.
- CT to compile a generic draft role for the H&S rep and circulate the most recent list of reps.

c. Aberystwyth Flexi System – management to devise and circulate a useful timesheet to replace the existing system – examples have been provided. If individual members are still not happy with the outcome, we will monitor and take up matters where appropriate.

d. Finance Team Changes – TO acknowledged that procedure had not been followed and has reminded Unit managers of the correct way to deal with proposed restructuring of teams.

5. Staff Council Actions – 1.7.09

Minutes were only circulated last week, and to AG and CT only, though Action Points were sent out earlier.

A number of actions have not yet been addressed – some go back to March 09.

ACTION

- Management to be asked that target dates are agreed and set in future, and responses to actions are circulated in advance of each subsequent meeting (at least a week beforehand) to permit feedback to and discussion with FCTU.

6. Health and Safety

Covered above at 4b above.

7. Annual Leave – extra half day for England & Scotland

Item dismissed.

8. Contact Centre Re-location

Meeting now arranged with Derek and Clare on 11th September to discuss this – though it looks like no additional info will be available before then and the decision has already been made. Questions remain unanswered however, and the issue was not discussed with FCTU before the decision was made.

CL is setting up a Contact Centre Integration Project and has asked for FCTU representation on this in a Staff User Assurance role – purpose of this to be clarified. No sound business case has been made for relocation of the Centre – unclear how new service will operate in the new open plan building by the time-scale of March 2010. Will new people be recruited or existing admin staff used? Who will manage and support the service? Knowledge of the business is essential for a quality service and public confidence in the 0845 number.

ACTION:

- PF and AG to attend meeting with Derek and Clare and then circulate note to all FCTU setting out the issues and process and the potential role of FCTU on the Integration Project Group to limit damage.

9. Re-structuring of Teams

Discussed at Staff Council and reminder note on correct FCTU consultation procedure has been sent to UNIT Managers by TO.

Coed y Cymoedd Local Area restructuring proposals have been drawn up and publicised on the CyC webpage by Peter Cloke. Queries have been raised on grade change proposals when essential duties haven't changed – formal evaluation needed. Queries raised with HR through the trawl process.

Finance Team – have posts been submitted for evaluation / inspection?

ACTIONS:

- CT to circulate S drive link to *Coed y Cymoedd* restructuring proposals.
- CT to check if HR have actioned comments on the CyC trawl.
- CT to follow up inspection of finance posts.

10. Management Postings

Covered under agenda item 13.

11. Business Sustainability and Flexible Working

At present, some staff members are required to return to office bases to work (and be seen by managers to do so) when there are flexible alternative options e.g. working from other offices, or from home. This results in inefficient use of time, additional mileage (with impacts on 'Business Sustainability' commitments and FCW's carbon footprint), and wear and tear on staff.

CL is about to clarify guidance for Unit Managers on this issue. FCTU is well placed to offer support with this. Training on maximising the benefits of flexible working (e.g. video / phone conferencing; keeping in touch with managers) also needs to be provided.

ACTION:

- AG to talk to CL on the potential support FCTU could provide.

12. Operational Posts – Part-Time

There is a need for consistency regarding part-time working and operational pay. Indication appears to be that p/t workers can't be operational – HR guidance in Wales is that non-operational is preferable.

ACTION: AG to raise with Sue Gillingwater as an item to consider at the GB Departmental Committee to clarify HR interpretation.

13. HR Matters – Various

a. Post Filling – Comparison of Union Consultation Arrangements

Details of how this is managed in the three countries was circulated by Sue Gillingwater for comment and correction.

There is currently no written agreement for this process in Wales and practice is inconsistent. Definition of the term 'consultation' needs clarification – often decisions have already been made before FCTU is informed and opportunities for real input are limited. Agreed that management usually informs rather than consults FCTU, and FCTU asks for rationale and reasoning behind decisions. Also need to be clear about role of FCTU in protecting members' interests rather than providing business management guidance.

ACTION: AG to -

- clarify where information in Sue's paper has come from.
- ask for accepted definitions of 'consult' and 'inform' in this process.
- Obtain copies of other countries' post filling agreements.
- ask Kath McNulty if she knows about any past agreements FCTU has had with management on this issue.
- circulate TOR for Staffing Issues Group to FCTU

b. Management Postings – still only being informed of postings on an ad hoc basis. Transparency / communication of rationale would be very helpful and has been requested previously.

ACTION: AG to remind TO at their next meeting.

c. Key / Non Key Posts Designation – AG now has a link to charts showing staffing structures for each unit. It had already been agreed that staff can ask Unit Managers about the designation of their own posts. Any changes in designation should be communicated to FCTU.

ACTIONS:

- Request at Staff Council meeting that charts showing posts (no names) be posted on the intranet for all to access (as they already are in Coed y Cymoedd).
- AG to ask how numbers of key and non-key posts provided have been calculated.

d. Welsh Language Mapping Exercise – unclear about how the data being collected in this important exercise will be used. Plan is to profile all posts and determine which posts are deemed to have a Welsh Language requirement. FCTU will be involved in development of a 'structure' by March 2010.

AG had asked at the Staff Council meeting for an update on the TOR for the Welsh Language Monitoring Group – not received to date.

ACTION: AG to check whether TOR for WLMG have been sent out.

14. Any Other Urgent Business

- a. New Entrants' Course & FCTU session – 24.9.09** – BA will run this session in Aberystwyth on behalf of FCTU.

ACTION: All members to send 50 copies of Union leaflets to BA ASAP for distribution.

- b. FCTU Website** – the Wales section has not been updated this year and mapping could be improved. No minutes have been posted since Nov 2008, and Staff Council minutes since Sept 2008 – this was supposed to be the main access point for members.

ACTION: Urgent review required – *WHO?*

- c. Modern Apprenticeships recruitment** – FCTU needs to be consulted on any programme review and new recruitment proposals.

ACTION: To be raised at Staff Council meeting on 21.9.09.

- d. HR Business Partner** – AG to thank TO for the consultation on the proposed recruitment prior to the job spec being written, but to request that the accepted process is followed from now on.

- e. **Annual Leave** – PCS has notified its members that HR want to issue guidance on new AL proposals:
- *harmonisation of leave years* from Apr 2010 (all will run 1st Apr – 31 March) – staff can bank time through a transition process.
 - *buying and selling of leave* – 3 year trial period – 2 days could be bought & sold in any leave year.
 - *Banking of AL* – currently staff can bank 50 days, but HR are concerned that arrangements are being misused with staff not taking the minimum 15 days' leave each year.
- f. **Waste Management in Offices** – this year is baseline year, so all offices need to establish what's being thrown away and what's being recycled, with the reductions being monitored and reported on from next year.

Measuring of waste is taking up staff time, though there is the option of paying for contractors to undertake this work – if resources are available. There appear to be mixed messages about the funds available for such contractors – we need to have consistent messages, practice and resources Wales-wide.

ACTION: AG to discuss with TO

- g. **Executive Officer, Estates** – AG to talk to TO about process not being followed.
- h. **CyM Assistant Recreation Ranger Post** – AG met with Ruth Jenkins (CyM FDM) about the post's 'timeline' and Welsh language issue. TO was to have responded to AG, but has now passed this to Ruth. Issues still to be clarified – post filling was very different to that sent out for comment to FCTU. The post was a 4 year (additional funded) fixed term, 7 month a year, with Welsh speaking essential (understood to be 'Category A'). It was subsequently filled from the transfer register by a full-time permanent member of staff. Although this post is still an FTA, other work has been found/funded to secure a combined post that is effectively 50 % FTA and 50% permanent. The Welsh language element of the FTA post had been changed to Welsh 'essential', though 'Category B' as opposed to 'Category A'. Other issues such as 4 years versus 3 years, 7 months versus 6 months and whether there is an agreed commitment for/by the post holder to learn Welsh are still to be resolved.

Need to learn the lessons from this with HR acknowledging that errors were made. AG to discuss with TO.

- i. **Review of Forest Estate** – AG to discuss with TO the role of FCTU in the structuring of the review.

**Date of next meeting – 19th November 2009, 10.00 – 15.00,
Coed y Gororau Forest District Office, Welshpool.**