

Minutes of the Prospect Forestry Commission BEC Meeting 31 January, 2005, Elmbank Hotel, York

Present

Robert Matthews
Paul Cody
Ian Tubby
Chris Finnerty

Andy Stewart
Iain Kirk
Tony Cousins

Apologies

Ian Willoughby
Gerry Robertson

Marcus Sangster

Agenda

The meeting started at 14.00. No agenda was drawn up prior to the meeting but the following issues were identified as 'priority';

- 1) Produce final draft of Pay ballot letter to membership.
- 2) Discuss possibility of creating a poll to allow members to put their opinion of the pay deal to Prospect and management.
- 3) Discuss Annual Delegate Conference (ADC) agenda.
- 4) Discuss motions submitted to ADC.

1) Produce final draft of Pay ballot letter to membership.

Robert Matthews and Chris Finnerty had produced a draft letter to the membership. This was circulated to the BEC. A discussion about the wording of the draft letter followed and numerous changes were made. The discussion included a summary of the 2004 pay negotiations by RM. It was acknowledged that BEC were unhappy with the pay offer but that further negotiations would not have improved this. BEC was disappointed to hear of management's aggressive attitude in the negotiations and subsequent communications with the TUS secretary. Fundamentally, it was felt that management had not done all they could to try and obtain additional funding from government in order to improve the pay offer made to their employees. Other organisations had lobbied government with some success. The possibility of industrial action was discussed. It was felt that industrial action would achieve little other than resulting in members losing pay. Because of this situation BEC felt that a 'no' vote could not be recommended to members.

Action: BEC to make sure all BEC members are copied into email discussions in future. All other action discharged.

2) Discuss possibility of creating a poll to allow members to put their opinion of the pay deal to Prospect and management.

Despite reservations from Prospect, BEC felt that it would be useful to conduct some form of poll that would enable members to give their views on the pay offer. The form of this poll was drafted during the meeting and BEC confirmed that it should be sent to the

membership with the pay ballot letter. A discussion followed on the likely reaction of members to the pay deal. CF reminded BEC that Prospect membership contained a high proportion of employees at the top of their pay scales, a group who had not done as well as their colleagues further down the pay scales in the previous 3 year pay deal. This group were likely to feel especially aggrieved by the 2004 offer. Where possible BEC may need to explain to members that Prospect negotiators could not have done anything different to secure a better offer and that the offer itself was coming from management, not Prospect. Other possible ways in which members could register their feelings over the pay offer were discussed. P.C. noted that jobs cuts needed to fund the pay offer would probably involve leaving posts vacant after current jobholders leave the FC. This could lead to increased workloads for remaining staff, notably unit managers who were often Prospect members. I.K. noted that the FC does not ring fence funds for pay.

3) Discuss Annual Delegate Conference (ADC) agenda.

BEC discussed the agenda and order paper. It was agreed that these should be submitted to Standing Orders Committee prior to the ADC.

4) Discuss motions submitted to ADC.

BEC discussed each motion and agreed on possible action to take on the motions should they get carried at conference. Ideas for emergency motions to be drafted by BEC were also discussed.

Date of next meeting.

The next planned BEC meetings will be held at Silvan House, Edinburgh on 8 June 2005 and on 6 September 2005.

The meeting closed at 18.00