

Minutes of Prospect BEC Meeting 6th September 2005, Silvan House, Edinburgh

Present

Glen Brearley (GB)
Chris Finnerty (CF)
Iain Kirk (IK)
Keith Miller (KM)
Marcus Sangster (MS)
Ian Willoughby (IW) (minutes)

MS welcomed GB to the BEC.

1. Apologies

Paul Cody (PC)
Tony Cousins (TC)
Ian Tubby (IT)

2. Minutes of previous meeting

Minutes of meeting of 8th June accepted.

3. Matters arising

Ending of specialist tour system

MS to ask Edward Shepperd, FC TUS Secretary (ES), what is the position of FTS forester staff, are they considered to be on tour. **Action MS**

MS to send email round members reminding those staff who consider themselves on tour the need to establish a paper trail (as a minimum being registered on the transfer register), as a prudent step to ensue they retain reserved rights should the tour system be abolished.

Action MS

IW to send Prospect email circulation list to MS

Action IW

Sickness absence management

TC to draft brief paragraph for BARK to remind staff that their union is there to support them, and should they have any difficulties arising from the new sickness management procedures, they should ask for support from their local lay member dealing with personal cases as soon as possible.

Action TC

Stalling of culture change in the FC

IK to draft brief paragraph for BARK and list three agreed questions on efficiency of staff survey process.

Action IK

Pay poll

Outcomes of survey have been presented to official side and other unions.
TC to provide summary of this action for BARK.

Action TC

Future of branch

CF recorded his satisfaction regarding the number of willing volunteers identified within the Prospect FC branch, and his appreciation to the BEC, and in particular TC, for achieving this.

Passenger mileage supplement

Rules are ambiguous, but need to ensure members don't face allegations of misconduct for how they interpret rules. KM to raise with ES.

Action KM

Research promotions

GB to draft paragraph for BARK, asking any members who have experienced problems with equitable implementation of FR promotion procedures to contact him or Tracy Houston with details.

Action GB

Alice Holt review

Forest Research review document, currently thought to be under discussion by the EB, needs to be discussed at the next BEC meeting, assuming it becomes publicly available. IT to put on agenda of next meeting.

Action IT

MS to write to ES asking him to get briefing from DG on FR review and its status.

Action MS

Stress survey

TC to raise stress survey with ES (carried forward).

Action TC

4. Closure of MTC, Ae

ES joined meeting and he informed the BEC of the sequence of events, that he had been informally made aware of proposals by Kim Lardge immediately prior to going on leave, and hence he passed the matter on to regional NOC chair. TUS are now awaiting start of formal consultations. Some disquiet over mechanics of this process were discussed.

BEC concluded TC should raise with TUS need to review consultation procedures when redundancy or transfer of staff is to take place.

Action TC

TC to initiate cross union discussion on mobility via ES, as Prospect believes that the enforceability of mobility clauses depends on particular circumstances and should not be taken as being generally applicable.

Action TC

With the assistance of CF, TC to raise the issue of consistent application of remote working arrangements with ES. Currently FC policy, such as it is, is not applied consistently

throughout the country e.g. why is it appropriate for many FC England staff, but not staff faced with prospect of relocating from MTC, or FR staff? A consistent remote working policy may make enforcement of mobility clause unnecessary, with benefits to the individual staff and cost savings for the organisation. Also, the possibility of remote working is likely to be a factor that reduces the legal force of mobility clauses.

Action TC / CF

5. FR Technical Support Unit: Review

So far it is apparent that 6 PB6s and 1 PB5 may be made redundant at Bush plus 2 PB6s and 1 PB3 at Alice Holt. BEC is happy about ES's response on behalf of TUS. GB to draft letter thanking him for his approach and his email to Ken Charles.

Action GB

6. Staff Survey

IK to provide article for BARK on staff survey results. Might discuss if results provide one possible performance measure for senior management.

Action IK

CF to discuss with ES whether bullying and harassment policy needs to be revised to take best practice in other organisations into account, specifically whether or not an informal stage could be introduced to allow resolution before formal, often highly confrontational and blame orientated procedures are initiated.

Action CF

7. Pay negotiations

BEC were satisfied that members concerns raised over 2004 deal are understood by the wider TUS, and await ongoing reports from pay negotiations.

8. AOB

KM to draft letter to Anne Douglas, asking for assistance in steps to encourage more member recruitment.

Action KM

CF provided an update on Prospect. The Stirling office is to be closed and relocated to Edinburgh. TC to note need to influence retention of CF as FC full time rep when appropriate.

Action TC

BEC thanked and acknowledged Robert Matthews for his considerable contribution to the BEC over many years, and expressed regret that he felt the need to resign from the BEC. BEC ask TC to explore if there are any ways that the Branch might be able to continue to utilise Robert's exceptional abilities.

Action TC

As management seems increasingly unwilling to consult or to support existing agreements with the TUS the Unions should not feel that they have to agree management proposals with which they disagree. The recent changes to the sickness rules is a case in point. TUS should be more willing not to agree, so that such changes then have to be taken by administrative action and cannot be presented as having TUS support in the case of disciplinary action or tribunal hearings.

TC to discuss with TUS

9. Date of next meeting: 6th December 2005 at Silvan House. IT to book room and arrange catering.

Action IT