

# Minutes of Prospect BEC Meeting 6<sup>th</sup> December 2005, Silvan House, Edinburgh

## 1. Present

Glenn Brearley (GB)  
Tony Cousins (TC) (Chair)  
Chris Finnerty (CF)  
Claire Johnston (CJ)  
Iain Kirk (IK)  
Keith Miller (KM)  
Marcus Sangster (MS)  
Ian Willoughby (IW) (minutes)

TC welcomed Claire Johnston from Prospect to the meeting.

## 2. Apologies

Paul Cody (PC) (standing down from the Forestry Commission Prospect Branch Executive Council (BEC) on a temporary basis, until further notice).  
Ian Tubby (IT)

## 3. Minutes of previous meeting

Minutes of meeting of 6<sup>th</sup> September were accepted as a true record.

## 4. Matters arising from meeting of 6<sup>th</sup> September

*Ending of specialist tour system* – discharged.

*Sickness absence management* – discharged.

*Culture change* – anonymity during staff survey was raised as greatest issue for members. TC to issue note in BARK reassuring members that any Prospect surveys or ballots are completely anonymous. **Action TC**

*Pay poll* – discharged.

*Passenger mileage supplement* – BEC motion required at ADC. **Action KM**

*Research promotions* – discharged.

*Alice Holt review* – (carried over) Forest Research review document, currently thought to be under discussion by the EB, needs to be discussed at next BEC meeting, assuming it becomes publicly available. IT to put on agenda of next BEC meeting. **Action IT / MS**

*Stress survey* – will take place in 2006. TC will adapt Prospect documents. Discharged.

## *Closure of MTC, Ae*

(carried over) MS to initiate cross union discussion mobility with ES, as Prospect believes that the enforceability of mobility clauses depends on particular circumstances and should not be taken as generally applicable. **Action MS**

(carried over) With the assistance of CF, MS 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 the 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 MS / CF**

## *FR Technical Support Unit Review*

IT and GB attended latest meeting, on behalf of FR NOC. No business case for redundancies presented yet, and no funding identified. By next meeting on 9<sup>th</sup> December management hoped to know if DEFRA will be prepared to fund. One research worker has already resigned at Alice Holt. GB and IT to continue to represent and report back to BEC.

**Action GB / IT**

MS to raise why review seems to have taken place in isolation of BIP, and general progress with BIP, at core group meeting.

**Action MS**

*Bullying and harassment* – (carried forward) BEC welcomed progress, but further action required, particularly on whether or not existing policy could 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 TC / CF**

Robert Matthews has been appointed as Forestry Commission representative at Prospect National Conference, until further notice.

## **5. Pay negotiations**

After staff ballot and rejection of pay offer, issue is currently with the FC Executive Board to discuss the way forward. MS / TC to inform ES that should current offer, or a worse one, be imposed on members:-

- (1) BEC's opinion was that there was a strong possibility that a majority of the membership might vote to work to rule if balloted;
- (2) BEC felt that it was likely to be more finely balanced as to the appetite for stronger industrial action such as strike action, but in the event of other unions deciding to vote strongly for industrial action, some members might be more persuaded.

**Action MS / TC**

MS / TC to ensure ES has fully informed Executive Board of history behind pay claim.

**Action MS / TC**

## 6. Pensions

BEC welcomed TUS deal on pensions age, but concerned over possibility of government backtracking on the deal. Peter Gosling is BEC pensions representative, and will continue to press Prospect nationally and inform BEC. TC will invite Peter to update the Annual Delegates Conference (ADC). **Action TC**

## 7. ADC

TC reported he is confident the Annual Delegates Conference will be quorate.

## 8. HR / TUS interaction

MS to ask Edward Shepperd if he perceives any difficulties with having HR staff as his reporting officers. **Action MS**

## 9. Any Other Business

### *Travel and subsistence*

TC reported that management have written to inform us that a 2.5% increase to most allowances will be made. MS to take forward following concerns to core group:-

- (1) Dissatisfaction over lack of consultation.
- (2) Dissatisfaction over failure to increase some allowances such as Friends and Family subsistence allowance.
- (3) Income tax limits should be a matter for individual employees, and for management to use them as an excuse not to increase allowances is a red herring.

### *Membership*

IK wished to record his thanks to Marlie Roes at Prospect for her help in attempting to draw together a full membership list.

IK to draft note for BARK on membership.

**Action IK**

IK to discuss Branch health check minute, to be provided by CJ, at next BEC meeting.

**Action IK / CJ**

## 10. Date of Next Meeting

Monday 6<sup>th</sup> February, Elmbank Hotel, York (also venue and date of ADC).  
Members are asked to arrive for a 1245hrs lunch.