

Minutes of Prospect BEC meeting 21st August 2007 via video/audio conference

Present:

Alice Holt: Tony Cousins (TC Lorraine Adams (LA) and Sue Benham (SB)

NRS: Glenn Brearley (GB) Andy Stewart (AS) and Iain Kirk (IK)

Wales: Bob Griffiths (BG)

1. Apologies

Apologies were received from Glen Dobson. Claire Johnston has returned to work and offered to attend in Glen's place but it was thought that Iain and Claire could more usefully liaise directly once we had discussed the recruitment exercise at this meeting.

2. Minutes of the Previous meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on 15th May were accepted.

3. Matters Arising

3.1 Membership/Distribution lists

Still has 2 different distribution lists he is collating to ensure that all members are included and then the members of the NOC's and staff councils will be given access to them.

Action IK

3.2 eBranch

TC has a note of the passwords to get into our eBranch, LA to have a look at how to publish information.

Action LA

3.3 Climate change letter to K Charles

LA to chase up this letter to Ken Charles and ensure a response is received.

Action LA still to action

3.4 Video Conferencing

3 Way video conferencing has not worked this time due to the notice period required by BT to set this up, BG joined the meeting this time by audio conferencing. LA to look into everyone audio conferencing so that all travel is reduced to a minimum.

Action LA

3.5 Greenerways

No feed back available from MS on this, LA to email Marcus for feedback.

Action LA

3.6 BSD Review

The BSD review does not seem to be causing too many problems and is resulting in the creation of an IT department. Other functions have been shared between HR, CFS, FAS and some disseminated back to individual countries. Staff have received a welcome letter and most relocations involve desk moving only.

3.7 On the Ground Initiative

There is a definite push towards facilities being shared in Scotland however it seems that Defra and SNH show some reluctance. Our main problem in keeping track of this situation is the lack of concrete information available and we seem to simply be chasing rumours. TC will contact GD for any more information he may have received as a result of contacting Alan Denny. AS has agreed to try to chase up the minutes and send a link to BEC.

Action TC/AS

3.8 Replacement of Chairman

TC has had a ring round with a few suggestions but wants to defer any further discussion on this subject until the October meeting.

Action TC

3.9 Health and Safety Memoranda

LA and TC will work on a letter together to regular updates to the HSM's so that staff can be confident of the information they are using. In the meantime a letter will be drafted to members and other H&S reps will be notified of the situation via the TU office.

Action TC/LA

3.10 Half Year Recruitment Drive

Iain has spoken to Claire about this and there are a number of suggestions that she put forward including 3 months free membership for new members, vouchers as a reward to current members recruiting a non-member and some sort of raffle. It was thought that it would be possible to run 3 events one in each country. Membership mapping is more difficult than originally perceived. After discussion it was thought that 3 months free membership might encourage those on Fixed Term Appointments (FTA) who currently are not represented. Iain was asked to go back to Claire with these suggestions and start the ball rolling. Recruitment drives are best run on the back of a campaign or specific subject. Pension changes, new pay deal or PMS review could be used as examples of the type of negotiations where a union could represent the individual.

Action IK

4. Pay

The 2007 pay claim has been submitted by TU group and has been accepted by management. Management are now awaiting approval from the Ministers of the 3 countries and finally from the Treasury.

Discussions regarding Pay 2008 have started early because there is to be a review of the whole pay and rewards system which it is hoped by starting early will be ready for implementation November 2008. At this time there are no further details available on this.

5. AOB

Short Term Contracts

A member from FR raised concerns to BEC regarding the use of casual short-term contracts within FR and whether this was becoming a cheap way of providing short-term staff. BEC members confirmed that this was becoming common practice throughout the FC rather than being a FR based situation. It was noted that we were unsure of the exact number of short-term casual staff employed because these positions do not need approval from TU Group. It was questioned whether the pension rights for this type of contract were different and whether this was a way of cost saving. It was also questioned whether casual contracts were covering the replacement of full time permanent positions, and whether the convenience of filling a staffing gap with this type of employee was actually the best solution to post filling.

It was decided that we should find out the number of short term contracts currently in force and if any unseen financial benefit is being received by employing this type of contract. This matter will be raised at the next Core Group.

Action LA/TC

Ops review Scotland

The original Ops review of Scotland took place 3 years ago in 2004 and was implemented in 2005. A review of the original review has now taken place to assess the merits and performance of the suggestions implemented. As many FCS staff

may be affected by this second review it should be discussed at the next FCTU meeting to ensure that members views and positions are being considered and negotiated.

Andy was asked to send a link to the review exercise published on the intranet.

Action AS

Publication of BEC minutes

Iain Kirk has noticed that Prospect BEC minutes on the intranet are only published as far as May 2006. LA will forward all minutes to Sam Telford for publication.

Action LA

Banking Mandate

Bob dated the bank signatory mandate with today's meeting and will send it off to confirm current and new signatories.

Action BG

6. Next Meeting

The date for the next BEC meeting was set for Tuesday October 23rd.