

**MINUTES OF MEETING OF FORESTRY BUSINESS UNITS STAFF COUNCIL
WEDNESDAY, 19 MARCH 2008 - MES HEAD OFFICE STIRLING**

Trade Union Side

E Williams T&S
A Gillies, GMB, TUS Chairman
L Villa, T&S, UNITE
J Brown, Prospect
N Russell, T&G
R Laird, GMB
R Beaney, TUS Chair
B Hamilton, FCE, PCS TUS Secretary

Management Side

D Killer (Chairing)
J Livingston, MES
M Reilly, HR

M Shearer, Secretary

1. Introductions

D Killer, chairing in M Ansell's absence welcomed everyone to the meeting.

2. Apologies for Absence

Apologies received from M Ansell and P Bulloch. TUS advised no Prospect replacement found as yet.

3. Minutes of Previous Meeting

The Minutes of 26 September 2007 were agreed a true record.

4. Matters Arising

HR presence. TUS were pleased to see M Reilly in attendance.

DISCHARGED

Qualifications on website. M Reilly issued a copy of the amended webpages on which the requirement for chartered status had been removed.

DISCHARGED

Employee Survey 2005. J Livingston advised this had not been fully implemented as yet but he would keep FBUSC advised.

DISCHARGED

Chirk closure - on agenda.

Prescription safety glasses. J Livingston advised he had investigated this and also issued the findings from both HR and H&S. There was no scope to change safety glasses but he encouraged concerned individuals to raise issues with local managers. R Laird reported damage to glasses due to bio oils which stained them. J Livingston advised safety goggles should be worn to avoid spray damage but was happy to consider individual problems.

M Reilly advised that individual incidences could be considered but if numerous complaints were arising this would have to be investigated. It was accepted that bio and mineral oil both required careful handling and that if damage was being caused to glasses through handling with gloves on then control measures required to be looked at. J Livingston advised that current advice is that bio oil was no more difficult to handle than mineral. Agreed J Livingston would have Fleet Engineer discuss this with suppliers and undertake an examination of reported problems at Cairnbaan.

ACTION: JL

Value for Money Delivery Plan. Communicating the information was discussed at the last FBU Service Board. Whilst he had no wish to issue a glossy brochure, M Ansell would be issuing a note to FBU staff, FBUSB, FBUSC, EB, etc advising of VMDP and how this will be monitored.

CONTINUING

5. Director's Briefing

Any items from the Director would form part of the FBU Heads' briefings.

6. FBU Heads Briefings

MES: Main focus at present is end of year financial matters. MES will outturn close to forecast but the main item is the additional spend incurred on repairs with a smaller amount on fuel. Further savings had been identified from the lease pool, ie under use of miles on leased vehicles. External income was down from what was anticipated. This was slightly concerning but the effort from the Workshops was appreciated. FE Scotland had placed an additional request for a further £2.8 million Capital expenditure late in the financial year and MES staff were praised for the way they had handled this. Key Performance Indicators saw job cost recovery within DRIVE much improved, high vehicle repair costs Scotland compared to England and Wales. There remained scope for improvement. J Livingston reported concern at P10 on the harvester availability figures but this data would be closely analysed at the year end. He reported grader/excavator costs in Scotland above target. Overall repair figures within MES show that they had beaten inflation, ie taken 2%-3% out of their costs and these was an extremely good achievement. Commenting on the difficulties experienced with the BP cycle this year he stated that additional budget would be required to meet the rising fuel costs. VMDP savings had been included in the budget. PDC rates would be reviewed over the coming months as there is a view that using this rate as a charging tool does not allow flexibility to cope with fuel rises. He advised of a recent presentation to the MESMB on 'Your Good Health' and that the Board had endorsed this concept and the roll out to MES staff. J Turnbull would head up co-ordination of this programme within MES. At the MES Reporting Standards meeting there had been no real concerns raised apart from the identified pattern of differing standards at some CCs which would receive attention. J Livingston mentioned the Greenerways Programme Board and

his representational role on this Board which covered travel, transport, waste, energy, etc. Targets are being set and adopted by FC. Business use vehicle emissions are required to reduce by 15% over the next 5 years. FC is performing well to address proposed reductions from the 2005/06 baseline figures. J Livingston would keep TUS informed. The next update to DRIVE was due to be released in 2008.

R Beaney queried the high repair costs and J Livingston advised that overall there was an improvement but the main focus was on an identified small group of machines showing problems and higher than expected repair costs. Various issues had contributed to this. Querying availability of harvesters, J Livingston advised A Gillies that forwarders showed 91% compared to a 93% target and harvesters 87% with a target of 90% at P11. Querying if the DP had affected this, J Livingston advised that at the Chapelhall the opposite was evident. Querying what would replace PDC rates, J Livingston advised A Gillies he envisaged moving to charging actual costs but this would need to be done in consultation with customers.

FCE: D Killer reported additional SLA work of £4.3 million plus additional external project work for FCE in the last year. Difficulties were being experienced in recruiting staff caused by too much competition in the market place. FCE were looking to encourage the development of existing staff to fill the void. Linked to both of the above FCE have experienced additional H&S incidents over the last year which they had now addressed. There was also an increased demand from staff coming from the new CDM and Quarry Regulations. He stated FCE would only take on work where there was an existing resource and trained staff with the required H&S awareness/experience. He gave a rough outline of some of the new requirements under CDM. FCE were now project managing small-scale hydro schemes within the RE Business Unit. There was lots of demand across the board for FCE staff. All Customer Satisfaction Survey returns received were above the target figure set.

HR: M Reilly advised that FC HR were looking to source an eRecruitment package to reduce the amount of paperwork involved. Board structures were also being reviewed.

7. FCE H&S Posts and Posts Downgraded

B Hamilton stated that there had been no notification of interest issued for the new FCE H&S posts and that FBUs currently had no HR Business Partner, with S Bennett temporarily moved to cover diversity issues. D Killer advised of a special LSC meeting on 19 December to consider the proposal for the H&S roles. Unfortunately only 2 TUS representatives had attended. The proposal was then ratified by the FCEMB on 20 December and thereafter by FBUSB. He appreciated further/additional communication would have been helpful but went on to say that posts would be reviewed over time to ascertain if the posts were correct and properly loaded part or full-time posts. Regarding the downgrading of the PB5 post, D Killer mentioned the difficulties FCE were experiencing recruiting staff and that the post would be advertised

at PB6a with a training plan to be put in place to develop the postholder to PB5 level.

8. Gweithdy Cymru /Chapelhall Update/DP Review

Gweithdy Cymru Subgroup had met on 2 further occasions. FC Wales had rejected the proposal as it stands and asked MES to consider staff issues, to identify key/non-key posts, machine replacement cycles and the impact all of this would have on the review. Querying a report that staff in MES were advised to apply for vacant FD posts, J Livingston agreed this would always be done and staff would be offered the training required to ease this process. He went on to advise A Gillies and R Laird that there was no decision to close the workshop but that it was under review with no decision taken. The current proposal was to move the workshop to Clawydd Newydd. A Gillies felt staff in the workshop had been treated differently and confusion had been caused. J Livingston stated that he would expect concern and not confusion where workplaces were under review. It was agreed J Livingston would speak to B Cochrane to arrange a further meeting of the Subgroup.

ACTION: J Livingston

Chapelhall

J Livingston advised that Subgroup communication had stalled due to the FES DP Review. He believed FES and TUS were to meet again late March and in discussion with E Shephard he had agreed no further action meantime. Robert Beaney advised that FES were to meet the TUS to provide solid proposals on which progress could be made. In the light of this information, J Livingston advised that the earlier proposal to close Chapelhall in September would now be postponed to allow time for full consultation. In the interim work would continue to appreciate the costs involved to renovate Inver and possible income from the sale of Chapelhall. He mentioned the briefing note he had issued to staff in September 2007 which outlined the position prior to the DP discussions stalling and stated he would consider a further briefing after the FES/TUS meeting on 26 March 2008.

R Beaney provided the meeting with an outline of the issues to be discussed on 26 March. He believed it would take time to reach resolution on this matter. JL would ensure staff were briefed after the next FES/TUS meeting.

ACTION: J Livingston

9. FES Admin Review

H Insley had advised that this would mark time until the District Review is concluded. A Gillies had written to M Ansell to query the outcome for MES of 2 FDs amalgamating and been advised that M Ansell had no knowledge of these discussions.

10. District Review

The consultation period had been extended. R Beaney advised the first meeting had agreed what the review would achieve and the process for consultation/negotiation from May 2008.

11. RE Update

D Killer advised of vacancies in the RE sector growing by 40% per annum in Scotland. Discussions with consultants indicate general difficulties for all recruiting companies. Meantime, to ensure time critical activities were undertaken (especially hydro), a project structure had been put in place under F MacCulloch with the negotiation of new wind projects being handled from Stirling. Consultants are pre-sifting a range of candidates for the Project Development role relating to Negotiation/Wind which will be at a slightly lower level than previously searched. A further interview round would take place on 3 April. Neil Benny has been appointed temporary administrator (6 months) at PB5 to cover Negotiation/Wind projects and to replace Kate Troughton who moves to FC Scotland.

12. FCE Jegs Review

D Killer provided an update on the outcome of the analysis following on from the Country split. Three posts, across the PBs had been identified for upgrading. Declarations of interest would be sought to fill these positions.

13. Any Other Relevant Business

FBU Staff Council Minutes. After discussion it was agreed these should be published once agreed with both management and TUS.

14. Date of Next Meeting

Meetings fixed as follows:

23 September 2008

18 March 2009