

**18<sup>th</sup> WALES STAFF COUNCIL MEETING,  
MONDAY 19<sup>th</sup> MARCH 2007, HELD AT FC WALES  
NATIONAL OFFICE, ABERYSTWYTH**

**OFFICIAL SIDE**

**Ian Forshaw, Director Wales  
Trefor Owen, Head of Estate Management  
Clare Lewis, Human Resources  
Sue Fuge, Minutes Secretary**

**TUS**

**Chris Tucker, T&GWU, Chair  
Andy Phillips, T&GWU  
Antony Griffiths  
Tony Egan**

**INTRODUCTION AND APOLOGIES**

1. Ian Forshaw welcomed everyone to the meeting, and recorded apologies from Kath McNulty.

**PREVIOUS MINUTES**

2. The previous minutes were agreed as an accurate record.

**MATTERS ARISING**

3. ODP – The ODP report had still not been published on the Intranet. IF assured the TUS that it would be published but with a warning that a lot of the information was now out of date. He stressed that he was using the Staffing Plan as his guide and not ODP.

**Action: Web team to publish ODP Report on Intranet**

4. Salary Sacrifice – A copy of the FC Choices leaflet containing information on the salary sacrifice element of the scheme had been attached to the previous minutes, however, the TUS raised concerns about the lower earnings limit and CL agreed to look into this further. It was also agreed that HR would issue a note to staff on where to find more information on this matter.

**Action: HR to investigate the lower earning limits re salary sacrifice schemes and draft note to staff to highlight information.**

5. Single Paying Agency – IF explained that updates on progress with the single paying agency were published in the regular G&L newsletter and he added that it was progressing well at the moment. He agreed to provide an exception report if problems arose.

**Action: PG to inform TUS of problems with progress on single paying agency**

6. Forest Holidays – IF reported that this area was progressing well and new developments in the South of England were being considered. IF had asked the EB if Wales could start identifying its own opportunities on the Welsh estate and had been informed that Forest Holidays would have to be given the first option, and if they were unable to develop a site then FC(W) could.

7. Post Devolution PB2 Posts – It was unclear whether Colin Sobota had taken forward this action point, and CL agreed to contact him to check on progress.

**Action: CL to speak to CS re PB2 posts**

8. JEGS for GIS Posts - IF reported that due to Alan Mitchell's forthcoming retirement, BSD as a whole was being reviewed. An Inventory Review was also taking place, and until these two reviews were completed the JEGS process was on hold.

9. JEGS for 6b Posts at Ruthin Office – AP stressed that it would be very advantageous if this JEGS exercise could take place in FY07/08. IF confirmed that these posts were on the list put to Silvan House and that if the response was negative he would highlight them as priority.

**Action: CL to check on progress**

### **STAFFING PLAN PROGRESS**

10. CL reported that the Staffing Plan had been published in January and a resumption system had been put in place to monitor actions. Unit Managers had been asked to provide proposed structures by the end of March and also identify key posts within those structures.

11. TE asked whether Business Units had been included in the Staffing Plan and IF replied that they had not been, but that Michael Ansell was looking at these independently. TE stressed that staff at BU's were very much part of the team and it was important to remember that they may want to move across to the forestry sector.

12. IF stressed that the Staffing Plan was not a staff reduction plan and in fact highlighted areas where recruitment was needed.

### **PROPOSED CHANGES TO POST FILLING PROTOCOL**

13. CL explained that at the moment Business Cases went to the SIB and then to the TUS for consideration. The present procedure was for the whole case to go the TUS but CL was proposing sending just the person and job specification to the TUS. CT replied that it was very useful for the TUS to see the whole Business Case so that it avoided coming back to management with questions. CL said that the process was slow and was causing time delays. IF stressed the importance of an efficient system that gave the TUS what they needed. It was agreed that CL and CT would discuss the possibility of further efficiencies.

**Action: CT & CL to discuss Business Case procedures further**

### **WINDFARM RECRUITMENT**

14. TO said that the windfarm bids were now being considered and there was now a need to have the team in place for the next stage of the process. He explained that the posts had gone through the Business Case process but 3 of them had not yet been released for trawl until the Team Leader post was confirmed. He added that all of the posts were permanent.

## **HR SERVICE BOARD**

15. The HR Service Board had now been established with TO as the Welsh representative. TO explained that the board was comprised of users of the HR service rather than staff involved in HR, although he confirmed that he spoke to CL before each meeting to ensure a joined up approach.

## **HR STATISTICS**

16. Sick Absence - IF reported that the sick absence statistics provided for the SIB gave useful information on the health of FC(W). He confirmed that he had asked CL to distribute the figures to Unit Managers but he stressed that he did not want the figures seen as a League Table, but to be used to identify potential problem areas.
17. TRA's – CL explained that the TRA figures provided had been skewed by the recent pay award but she confirmed that there were currently 18 people on TRA.

## **HEALTH & SAFETY**

18. IF circulated a note from Clive Thomas highlighting his responsibilities as H&S Director, and confirmed that Clive Thomas would provide an objective independent view of H&S. TE asked about the Environment element and IF confirmed that Gordon Adam dealt with this. CT informed the meeting that, in John Dodd's absence, he would be acting as H&S rep for the TUS. TO asked if there was an individual in each unit dealing with H&S and CT confirmed that there was and that he would provide TO with a list of reps.

**Action: CT to inform TO of H&S Rep at each unit**

## **DIVERSITY WORKING GROUP**

19. CT asked for an update on the Diversity Group and IF confirmed that the group would continue under CL's leadership. He explained that the EB had met with the Committee for Racial Equality and the FC needed to do a lot of work on Diversity. IF said that FC(W) had made a good start on this with CL getting a WAG representative to attend both the Management Board and Management Forum. He added that the Diversity Group was a part of the larger GB group so it may get held up because of the GB Strategy, but he stressed that he was keen to get this moving as soon as possible. CT said that Barbara Angelrzake of Cydcoed had offered to help with this area and this was welcomed.

## **STAFF VISITS ABROAD**

20. AB asked if FC(W) supported visits and exchanges to other countries, because many staff seemed unaware of the processes for getting involved. IF replied that there were criteria and procedures for overseas visits, and that they were set out in the Staff Handbook. He added that the FC were currently exploring possible exchanges with Sweden and this was being discussed in Silvan House. AG stressed that it was useful for staff from different areas of the FC to get involved in these kinds of trips/projects. TE flagged up a possible exchange opportunity that he was aware of and agreed to discuss it further with CL.

**Action: CL & TE to discuss exchange opportunity**

## **CONTACT CENTRE**

21. AG said that the Union had been receiving comments and complaints about the Contact Centre, but the TUS did not feel that the Union was the best forum for this. He suggested that a formal complaint procedure be introduced by the Centre. IF agreed to discuss this further with Derek Stephen.

**Action: DS to respond**

## **ASSESSMENT CENTRES**

22. CT asked whether the recent assessment centre exercise had been successful and TO replied that it had and that feedback from the assessors and participants had been very positive. He added that he intended to use Assessment Centres in future, certainly where Team Leaders were being recruited.

## **LIGHT VEHICLE REVIEW**

23. TO reported that he had seen a copy of the FC(S) report and had asked Bruce Cochrane and Matthew Park to look at it and consider Welsh issues. He said that in light of the Greenerways initiative, the use of 4x4 vehicles needed to be considered and Capes and private mileage would also need to be considered in the future.

24. TE asked about traffic accident reporting and TO invited TE to speak to him outside of the meeting.

**Action: TO & TE to discuss accident reporting**

## **REDUCTION IN FLEET**

25. AP stressed that this agenda item was purely founded on rumour, but he felt it needed to be raised. IF said that by the end of March he would have invested £1million in the fleet and intended to do more in the next financial year. He asked for the minutes to record his commitment to the continued running of the fleet, and stressed that he had no intention to reduce the fleet. TO said he was astounded and annoyed that people had to be subjected to this unnecessary anxiety from unsubstantiated rumours. It was agreed that it would be beneficial for IF to meet with WSO.

**Action: SF to contact David Cross to arrange meeting with Director**

## **NEW ASSEMBLY BUILDING**

26. IF reported that progress with the new building was not going well at the moment. Jon Westlake and Bill MacDonald had both reported that the FC were being looked at as tenants in the building and not being considered as part of the Assembly. IF reported that he was due to meet with Huw Brodie, the new Director of EPC, in the coming week and would be discussing this further.

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