

**Paper No. 1**

**GRAMPIAN REGIONAL FORESTRY FORUM**

MINUTES OF MEETING HELD AT THE CASTLE HOTEL, HUNTLY ON THURSDAY 6<sup>TH</sup>  
DECEMBER 2007

**Members**

**Present:** Mrs. Priscilla Gordon-Duff, Chairman  
Dr. Una Urquhart      Mr Jim Royan  
Mr. Irvine Ross      Dr. Ian Francis  
Mr David Leslie  
Cllr. Michael Raeburn

**Also present** Mr Paul Timms representing SNH.  
Mr Stewart Johnston, SGRPID  
Ms. Judith Cox, Aberdeenshire Council

**Forestry Commission Scotland Staff attending:**  
Mr. John Risby, Conservator (Grampian)  
Mr Phil Whitfield, FDM Moray  
Mrs. Margaret Lloyd, Secretary

**Apologies:** Prof. Hugh Miller      Prof. David Mackay  
Mr Chris Piper      Mr. Roger Polson  
Mr. Eric Baird      Dr. David Bale  
Mrs Emma Williams

**Welcome**

The Chair welcomed all those attending and remarked on the success of the Climate Change lecture given by Prof. Pete Smith earlier in the day.

**Minutes of last meeting**

The minutes of the meeting held on 12 June 2007 were considered and, with one amendment, were accepted by the Forum. The success of the Press Release, issued after the visit to Norbuild, was noted. This had been picked up by the local Press and by Forestry & British Timber Magazine.

**Matters Arising - Action Points from previous minutes**

All Action Points had been completed.  
There were no matters arising not covered later in the Agenda.

**Round Table Updates**

**PGD** – Enjoyed the Forestry Commissioners Visit to Grampian in September which was a most successful event. Congratulated the Grampian team on a well balanced and executed demonstration of forestry in the area.

A copy of the brochure issued to the Commissioners to be passed on to the Forum members. **AP/ML**

**UU** – Attended Forest & Water Seminar (report follows later) and consultation meeting on SRDP.

**J Royan** – Aberdeen Royal Infirmary have won a Green/renewables award for planning a new system using woodfuel as a key heating source on site. Eric Murray, Facilities Director is happy to show interested parties the plans. Involved with Moray Forest District Pluscarden/Monaughty consultation. Pleased to see plans adjusted as a result of first meeting.

**JC** - The Aberdeenshire Council Rural Affairs Working Group will now discuss Forestry issues (incorporating the role of the previous Forestry Working Group), WIAT schemes are progressing.

**ML** – Assisting the RPAC to set the rural priorities for Grampian, helping to organise public meetings & gather responses & comments and contributing to the Commissioners Visit.

**MR** – Involved with proposed new joint headquarters for Grampian Police and Grampian Fire & Rescue which may be first Public Sector Building to be 100% wooden. Seeking information on Architects/Designers/Project Managers for wooden buildings. **AP/JR**

**IF** – Involved in the development of Wetland Strategy as part of NE Biodiversity Action Plan to re-create large wetland areas, relates to forests too. Expand, restore or riparian woodland and create new areas. List currently being compiled. Working group with FCS/FE/SNH to revise & clarify guidelines on working with protected species. Guidance notes 31-34 refers, seeking feedback. These to apply to agricultural land as well.

**DL** – Two plants will shortly be producing pellets at Arbuthnott & Inverurie. Aboyne sawmill to burn co- products with substantial carbon savings. James Jones have formed a partnership with an Austrian firm to import solid wood panels for house building, ultimately it is hoped to have a plant in Grampian. Can be used in place of steel & polystyrene. Effect of James Jones Lockerbie operation increasing the need to source timber for Aboyne in Grampian. Relates to both grants & timber forecasts.

**IR** – Attended Forest & Water Framework seminar (report follows later) Capercaillie day at Finzean very useful, this was run by Kenny Kortland who is now Ecological Adviser for FE. RPAC priority consultation very lively but productive. WIAT Seminar – interesting & diverse speakers – heath & welfare, mental health issues & Portlethen site visit .

## **Report on Scottish Forestry Forum Meeting**

Report from Ian Francis

IF, JR & EB attended this very good and useful meeting, attended by about 35 people. Bob McIntosh gave a very positive update on the FCS budget position. The Timber Transport Fund has been given £5m/year, SRDP is much as forecast.

Forest Enterprise have a flat-line budget for the next 3 years but they now have the flexibility to finance land purchases by sale of National Forest Estate in order to enable the new planting required to support the Climate Change policy.

Progress of 07/08 Scottish Forestry Strategy Implementation Plan: 120 milestones with 25 actions, all but 5 are on target. Indicators of progress are being developed.

Meeting split into sector workshops on such matters as Timber & Business

Development etc. Regional workshops will follow at a later date.

New draft policy on Deforestation out for consultation. **(AP/ML to circulate.)**

.Concerns were expressed about FC being risk averse and not ambitious.

A stronger presumption will exist for compensatory planting, specifically for planning & development and also concern about net deforestation which ties in with the carbon sequestration issue. Insistence on compensatory planting has to come from Local Authorities.

Comment s–

- Insistence on use of FSC timber and flexibility to move grants between years might help reduce deforestation. (this flexibility causes problems with Public Sector annual budget system)
- Growth of UKWAS Certified woodland is growing but slowly, this may improve when Forest Plans are back in operation.

## **Report on Forestry & Water Seminar**

Reports from Una Urquhart & Irvine Ross from the Forest & Water Guidelines Seminar held at Finzean on 4 October 2007 are attached for reference.

Comments:

Paul Timms SNH: Payments are being made to farmers for income forgone on riparian edges on Deeside. Funding for works on rivers ends in July 2008.

Practice from 1970s & 80s colours attitudes, foresters are aware they can cause pollution events.

RDI website will list presentations in due course.

Seminar was well attended and was very successful. Delegates saw harvester & forwarder in operation and had an opportunity to see all the issues.

Reasons for holding the seminar:

- Pollution – highlight damage caused by forestry pollution in the Dee
- Raise awareness of the Water Framework Directive regulations
- Consider Dee Catchment Management Plans.

## **Update on Woodfuel Task Force**

Presentation attached for information – introduced by John Risby who also informed the meeting that as yet, no one had been appointed to the Biomass Development Officer but recruitment was ongoing.

## **Update on SRDP**

Presentation attached for information

A meeting was held on 20<sup>th</sup> November at the Castle Hotel, Huntly to allow those with an interest in forestry to contribute to the consultation on the SRDP Regional Priorities for Grampian. These will form a framework for consideration of applications under the new Rural Priorities Scheme which is expected to launch next Spring.

Thanks were expressed to the Forum and particularly Hugh Miller for chairing this meeting.

Although the timetable for SRDP grants is not yet fixed because the plan has not yet received approval from the EU it is anticipated that we should be able to accept the first Statements of Intent in March.

Over £500m of funding would be available under Rural Development Contracts. This scheme will be competitive with the regional priorities set to try to focus activity. Staff training has begun and a series of meetings for agents and advisers has taken place.

WIAT & the Forest for People Challenge will be separate from SRDP but will have to wait until SRDP approval. No details are yet available but they will be circulated as soon as possible.

## **AOCB**

MR informed meeting that he understood that there had been significant rises in the temperatures of the River Dee (2%) & River Don (4%) and asked if forestry might be used to control the temperature in the head waters? It was confirmed that this was possible with the appropriate re-introduction of native woodlands to produce shade.

DL Showed the meeting an interesting and detailed slide of projected supply and demand for timber in Scotland which illustrated some of the issues which effect the forestry industry now and in the future.

PW raised the issue of NEFIC (North East Forest Industry Cluster) and emphasised that a practical focus would be needed if it were to be re-instated.

## **SFS – Implementation Plan – discussion & endorsement**

The meeting then split into two work streams to consider the draft prepared for the Grampian part of the SFS Implementation Plan in the light of the feedback from the workshops held at the last Forum meeting in September. Comments were submitted by a volunteer from each group.

**AP/IF & PW**

Consideration to be given to links between SRDP & SFS

**AP/J Risby**

After thanking all those who had contributed to the success of today's meetings, fixing dates for the next four meetings and wishing everyone the compliments of the season the Chair closed the meeting.

**Dates of next meetings for the next year –**

**Thursday 6<sup>th</sup> March 2008** (*Please note change of date*)

**Thursday 5<sup>th</sup> June 2008**

**Thursday 4<sup>th</sup> September 2008**

**Thursday 4<sup>th</sup> December 2008**