

MINUTES OF THE 910<sup>TH</sup> MEETING OF  
THE FORESTRY COMMISSIONERS  
THE GREAT OAK HALL, WESTONBIRT ARBORETUM  
10<sup>TH</sup> JUNE 2015

Present

Harry Studholme (Chair), Mary Barkham, Amanda Bryan, Ian Gambles, George McRobbie, Jo O'Hara, Keith Oates, Wilma Harper, Jean Lindsay

Also Attending

Fiona Alexander (Minutes)

**1. Introduction and Apologies**

The Chair opened the meeting and welcomed George McRobbie to his first meeting as the new Forestry Commissioner for Scotland. Mr McRobbie introduced himself, advising that he was the Managing Director of UPM Tilhill which was both a customer of, and a supplier to, the Forestry Commission. The value of business between UPM Tilhill and the Forestry Commission is substantial and Commissioners were minded to be cognisant of this and the significant role UPM Tilhill has in woodland creation, particularly in Scotland. The meeting noted that Mr McRobbie's 'Register of Interest' will list all pertinent information and agreed that any issues arising from the relationship between UPM Tilhill and the FC will be properly noted, openly managed, and handled appropriately.

No apologies were received.

**2. Minutes of 19 March 2015**

The minutes were agreed as a true record.

**3. Matters Arising**

- i) HMRC VAT Audit
- ii) **Not published as per Section 35 (1)(a) of the Freedom of Information Act 2000.**

- ii) Liability Cases

The meeting heard that as at 31 March 2015, England had 16 open member of the public cases

**Action Point** Jo O'Hara to email details of member of the public cases in Scotland

- iv) Diversity Statistics

**Action Point** Secretary to email information on the gender split across senior and middle management in the countries

#### **4. FC Going Forward**

**Not published as per Section 35 (1)(a) of the Freedom of Information Act 2000.**

#### **5. Forest Holidays Board**

The meeting was given an update on the steps taken to progress the recruitment of a board member to represent FC interests on the Board of Forest Holidays. The background to this recruitment was explained and the meeting discussed the proposed role and job description.

The meeting discussed the skills and competencies the successful candidate would require which included an understanding of the FC ethos and business and proven knowledge and experience of financial matters. These competencies were vitally important given the complex relationship between the FC and Forest Holidays.

The meeting agreed that the FC would proceed with a process to appoint a new FC-nominated board member for the Board of Forest Holidays. A decision on when the new appointment would actually be confirmed would be made at a later date, in the light of progress with the appointment process and circumstances at the time.

**Action Point** Wilma Harper to start a targeted, affordable recruitment campaign as soon as practicable.

**Action Point** Wilma Harper and Sir Harry Studholme to discuss and agree composition of the interview panel

**Action Point** Ian Gambles to provide a paper on Forest Holidays business issues for the next meeting in September

**Action Point** Wilma Harper to liaise with Dr Bob McIntosh and invite him to attend the next meeting for this item

#### **6. Central Services Report**

The meeting discussed the report and noted the following:

- i) a 70% staff response rate to the Safety Climate Survey 2015;
- ii) a refreshed FR Agency will be in place by April 2016, subject to appropriate consultation;
- iii) the FC met with the TU Side to discuss arrangements for payment of Holiday Pay back-pay. The meeting failed to reach an agreement.

#### **7. England Report**

The meeting discussed the report and noted the following:

- i) RDPE - the York hub has closed.

- ii) the Commissioners noted the Commendation for Norman Healy and expressed their thanks for his endeavours;
- iii) the BUPA sponsorship pilot on the public forest estate in England.

## **8. Scotland Report**

The meeting discussed the report and noted the following:

- i) the first meeting of the Rural Affairs, Food and Environment Board was very positive with a push for more integration going forward;
- ii) the new grant scheme is in place and is on track for all legacy payments. Contracts are not currently available and 'Letters of Comfort' have been sent to applicants as an interim measure. Commissioners expressed their thanks to staff for their hard work in rolling out the new programme;
- iii) the Pine Tree Lappet Moth has recently been found in Caledonian Pinewoods. Potentially this is a high-risk pest in iconic woodlands and although only small numbers have been found so far, it poses a challenge for tree health.

## **9. Any Other Business**

Mr McRobbie requested more visibility of health and safety given the poor safety record within the forestry industry. The meeting was reminded that an annual health and safety report is presented to Commissioners, usually in December, and health and safety is reported in the Annual Reports. At a country level issue major initiatives are ongoing in which the executive is fully engaged. The base level safety climate survey received a 70% response rate.

**Action Point** Scotland and England will add health and safety to their respective National Committee agendas on a quarterly basis

## **10. Date of Next Meeting**

30 September - 1 October 2015 to include a Tour of Scotland.