



**ARBORICULTURE AND FORESTRY ADVISORY GROUP (AFAG)  
NOTES of 17<sup>th</sup> MEETING**

Date	1 December 2009	Location	FC HQ, Edinburgh	Taken by	Frances Hirst Jason Liggins Simon Parry	Action	
HSE		AFAG MEMBERS					
	Graeme Walker (Chair) Alan Plom (Secretary) Frances Hirst Jason Liggins Simon Parry Marcia Davies  <b>Observer</b> Wayne Grills (Lantra Awards)		Gerald Bonner (TCIA) James Brown (CONFOR) Ros Burnley (Lantra SSC) Audrey Campbell (UNITE) Des Campbell (DARDNI) Chris Cooper – Abbs (Lantra Awards) Hans Fairley (AEA) Bruce Hamilton (PCS/IAgrE) Steve Hewitt (City & Guilds NPTC) Alex Laver (ISA) Martin Lennon (NPTC Assessor) Pete Jackson (UAG)		Neil McKay (ICF) Donald Maclean (FCA) Imogen Mole (NATO) Graham Munford (IOSH) Alex Murray (UKFPA) John Price (LGE) Emily Ramsay (FC) Simon Richmond (AA) Simon Wallis (FC)		
Item	Key points and actions						
1	<b>Welcome &amp; Opening Remarks</b>  1.1 Graeme Walker, Head of HSE's Agriculture & Food Sector welcomed members to the 17 <sup>th</sup> AFAG meeting and thanked the Forestry Commission for hosting the meeting. He welcomed Simon Wallis (FC - replacing Jim Dewar), Wayne Grills (observing on behalf of Lantra Awards) and Marcia Davies (Head of HSE's Operational Strategy Division).						
2	<b>Urgent Business</b> <i>[ie Matters arising at recent meetings, etc, to inform discussion.]</i>  2.1 The position of AFAG Technical Secretary was discussed following the departure of James Dewar. Simon Richmond explained the background to the post which continued after the demise of FASTCo. Members agreed that AFAG now had a sufficiently wide range of expertise which could be called on when necessary and it was no longer necessary to have one individual in this role.  2.2 The idea for a Forestry Summit is discussed in paragraphs 9.5 and 9.6						
3	<b>Minutes of 16<sup>th</sup> Meeting</b>						

	The minutes were agreed as a true record of the meeting.	
	<p><b>Matters arising</b> <i>[Not covered in the Action Notes, or elsewhere on agenda.]</i></p> <p>4.2 Min 5.4 - A suitable amendment to the text of the Bomel Report Accident report has been drafted. Report to be published on HSE web site as soon as possible. <b>ACTION: HSE</b></p> <p>4.3 Min 5.5 The Bomel Analysis of Occupational Ill Health is also to be placed on the web site asap. <b>ACTION: HSE</b></p> <p>4.4 Min 6.1 Terms of Reference and work plan are with HSE Web Team. <b>ACTION: HSE</b></p> <p>4.5 Min 7.3 The Forestry Forum has still to meet. James Brown is continuing his talks with the industry. <b>ACTION: James Brown</b></p> <p>4.6 Min 7.5 Ros Burnley to send Lantra SSC Research Factsheet for Trees and Timber to Members. <b>ACTION: Ros Burnley</b></p> <p>4.7 Min 7.15 Revision of Guide to Good Climbing Practice and drafting of Guide to Good Rigging Practice are in AA's budget for the coming year. WG to be convened. <b>ACTION: John Price</b></p> <p>4.8 Min 7.19 Martin Lennon still to reply to Simon Bowes's letter re chainsaw gloves. <b>ACTION: Martin Lennon</b></p> <p>4.9 Min10.7 Simon Parry confirmed that although the Forestry SHADs cover forwarder, harvester and chainsaw operations they are varied to cover local geographical conditions. Members requested that the trainers ensured that the advice given reflects that in INDG 294, particularly with regard to managing multiple machines. As the day is very interactive and without a defined script it is easy to adapt to local needs.</p> <p>4.10 Min10.7 This year's final Arb SHAD is being held on 9 March 2010 in Richmond Park. 4 further events are planned for 2010/11. The first 2 are to be held on 27 April 2010 (Acton Scott Historic Farm, Shropshire) and 28 April (Haigh Hall, Wigan.) The last three Forestry shads of 2009/10 are listed for 9/3, 11/3 &amp; 24/3 in Exeter, Llandoverly &amp; Huntly.</p>	<p>Done</p> <p>Done</p> <p>WG to meet 31 March 2010</p> <p>Draft Article circulated</p>
5	<p><b>Review of AFAG projects</b></p> <p>5.1 Graeme Walker informed Members that the AFAG workplan needs to reflect the structure and themes of HSE' new strategy. It was agreed that the Secretariat would do the necessary re-drafting on Members behalf. <b>ACTION: HSE</b></p>	

***A1 Cultural change and causes of accidents related to risk reduction.***

5.2 Project A1 is complete work being taken forward by projects A2, A3 and D3.

***A2(A) Training & Certification and A2(B) Mapping European Training Standards initiative.***

5.3 Discussed separately under Agenda item 10.

***A3 Reduce accidents involving chain saws.***

5.4 Project group met in July 2009. Key cause of accidents in forestry is being hit by falling trees and in arboriculture being cut by a chainsaw. Competent workers are essential, this relates back to training and certification and maintenance of skill levels through appropriate refresher/update training. Although refresher/update training is recommended this is not being taken up properly. This situation needs to be reviewed.

5.5 Also important that management doesn't reward short cuts eg through piece work.

5.6 AFAG also needs to show that its work is driving down accident rates. Currently no baseline to work to. Small working group to be formed to look at how the industry may be able to record the necessary information/performance indicators. Members interested in joining this group to let Sector know (see also paragraphs 9.5. and 9.6 on Forestry Summit)

**ACTION: Members**

5.7 Key learning points, in particular root causes, from accident investigations to go on Treework website.

**ACTION: HSE**

5.8 Competent management and supervision is also essential. This element of the work to be carried forward by Project D3.

***B1 Identifying and promulgating precautions for machines working on steep slopes.***

5.9 Project complete.

***B2 Improving management of work at height, including implementation of the Work at Height Regulations.***

5.9 The AA's Guide to Good Climbing Practice is to be revised and this is to be linked to the drafting of a Guide to Good Rigging Practice. Working group to be convened shortly.

**ACTION: John Price**

WG to meet  
31 March  
2010

***B3 Examination of feasibility of welfare provision on forestry work sites.***

5.11 Project linked to the pesticides project C4. Working Group met. AFAG 103 Planting to be revised and information to be made available prior to start of planting system. A

hazard alert is to be released in advance of revised AFAG 103.

**ACTION: HSE**

***B4 Rigging and dismantling techniques in arboriculture.***

5.12 HSE funding has been made available for 4 articles covering key findings from the research report. These are due to be completed by the end of the financial year and will be available via the Treework website and the trade press.

5.13. HSE funding has also been made available for a practical workshop aimed at key stakeholders to promulgate the research findings. Workshop to be held on 16 March 2010. Frances Hirst to send invitation to all AFAG Members.

**ACTION: Frances Hirst**

5.14 The AA's Media and Communications Committee are convening a project group (chaired by John Price) to draft a Guide to Good Rigging Practice (to be run in conjunction with revision of the Guide to Good Climbing Practice).

**ACTION: John Price**

WG to meet  
31 March  
2010

***B5 Machine-assisted takedown of trees.***

5.15 Revision of AFAG leaflets 310 Use of Winches in Directional Felling and Takedown and 603 Mechanical Harvesting almost complete. Awaiting graphic design, photographs and final edit.

**ACTION: Working Group**

5.16 HSE has been approached by the National School of Forestry and researcher to organise a workshop on dealing with edge trees at the next APF. This is part of the proposed "Safety Arena".

**ACTION: Jason Liggins**

***B6 Chainsaw PPE – to improve and promote standards and related issues.***

5.17 The issue of chainsaw speed and standard of chainsaw protection has been raised with HSE. This is to be taken forward by Hans Fairley and James Brown in conjunction with Nick Vaughan HSL rep on BSI protective clothing committee (due to meet mid December 2009)

**ACTION: Frances Hirst/Hans Fairley/James Brown**

***B7 Market surveillance (product design).***

5.18 A number of issues relating to wood chippers were raised. The HSL research highlighted the potential for looking at reducing noise at source on these machines. The findings from the HSL research report needs to be put on Treework website. There has also been some recent enforcement action on guarding standards and AIS 38 Power Fed Mobile Wood Chippers needs to be reviewed.

**ACTION: HSE**

***B8 Treework near Overhead Power Lines***

5.19 A new site has been identified in Wales and the date for the research work to start is to be agreed. Jason Liggins is liaising with Gordon Adam and John Madden (HSE Specialist Inspector). ADAS are to be asked to join the Project Group. It is essential that the Project Group is fully aware of the work being carried out by the electricity companies so that the final outcomes are agreed by all parties. ADAS/ENA are to be asked to clarify exactly where they are with their work before Phase 2 begins.

**ACTION: HSE/ Project Group**

***C1 Promotion of Occupational Health Services***

5.20 This project is to be restarted, with work in Scotland and Jason Liggins is attending a meeting in February 2010.

**ACTION: Jason Liggins**

***C2 Identifying the prevalence and causes of musculoskeletal disorders and develop strategies for risk reduction.***

5.21 Members agreed that this was too huge a topic to drop altogether. Alex Laver reported back on the workshop he recently attended in the States and showed Members a simple "alert" card that had been produced. It is important to publicise what information there is (eg *Watch your back*) and this can be done via the treework web site. Jason Liggins is aware of some research that can be referenced on the web site and will forward the information to Frances Hirst.

**ACTION: Jason Liggins**

5.22 Pete Jackson reported that UPM Tilhill is using physiotherapy to good effect.

5.23 John Price is to ask the AA to include MSDs on the programmes for next year's amenity and utility arb conferences.

**ACTION: John Price**

5.24 A check also needs to be made on the info in the National Occupational Standard (NOS) to ensure that this is the correct standard.

**ACTION: HSE**

5.25 Project C1 will also be able to take this forward, at least in Scotland.

**ACTION: Jason Liggins**

***C3 Reduce operator exposure to hand-arm vibration, whole body vibration and noise.***

5.26 The research report on WBV in forestry has been published. The information that it contains is complicated and the aim is to produce separate guidance for managers and users. This work is almost complete and will be sent out for consultation shortly.

**ACTION: Jason Liggins**

Done

	<p><i>C4 Reduce exposure to pesticides, e.g. during tree planting.</i></p> <p>5.27 See comments under project B3.</p> <p><i>D1 Promotion of best practice in arboriculture and forestry.</i></p> <p>5.28 Feed back on the new Treework web site has been extremely positive. Any issues raised are dealt with as they come in. Members were asked to continue providing comments.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><b>ACTION: Members</b></p> <p>5.29 Work is being carried out in conjunction with Myerscough College to produce further, better quality videos. These will be used both internally by the college and will be available on the Treework website.</p> <p>5.30 As this project has fulfilled its initial remit it can be closed.</p> <p><i>D2 Production, review and maintenance of AFAG, HSE and industry guidance.</i></p> <p>5.31 This project has also fulfilled its initial remit and will be closed.</p> <p><i>D3 Improving Management of H&amp;S &amp; the Role of SSC at Forestry Sites (incl Lone Working).</i></p> <p>5.32 Due to the complexity of this project it has been split into two parts D3a is dealing with the revision INDG 294 and D3b is looking at lone working.</p> <p>5.33 The D3a working group has met 4 times and there are still some issues to be resolved. The current working title for Site Safety Coordinator is Forestry Works Supervisor. This idea is that this individual will be appointed by the FWM and act as a conduit for information and supervision when the FWM is not on site.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><b>ACTION: Working Group</b></p> <p>5.34 Jason Liggins is to convene D3b Working Group in the new year.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><b>ACTION: Jason Liggins</b></p>	
	<p><b>Proposals for new AFAG projects</b></p> <p>6.1 Jason Liggins introduced paper AFAG/09/06 outlining 3 potential new projects.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>The Use of Alpine Tractors in Forestry</b> – Members agreed that this should be carried forward.</li> <li>• <b>Cable Crane Winching Signals</b> – suggested as there is now a potential for cable cranes to work alongside other industries such as construction of wind-farms and signals used in forestry do not align with the BS. Donald Maclean reported that on the whole the industry normally uses radios and does not want to change the hand signals that it uses on an occasional basis. Members agreed that this project should not be taken forward.</li> <li>• <b>Felling Large Trees</b> – Members agreed that this issue needs reviewing. Previous research found that that having 2 people in the felling zone was unsafe. This view</li> </ul>	

	<p>should only be changed if the risk assessment finds that having 2 people available will actually make the operation in a particular situation safer. <b>ACTION: Jason Liggins</b></p> <p>6.2 Alex Laver suggested a project looking at the use of cranes in arboriculture. Members agreed that this should be taken forward and a Working Group formed. This would work closely with working group revising the Guide to Good Climbing Practice and producing the Guide to Good Rigging Practice. <b>ACTION: Alex Laver/Frances Hirst</b></p> <p>6.3 Graeme Walker added the caveat that whether any new work can be taken forward will depend on what funding is available next year.</p>	
8	<p><b>Standards work</b></p> <p>8.1 No standards meetings had taken place since the last AFAG meeting in May 2009. However, the UK would be holding the next ISO TC 23 / SC15 meeting in the summer of 2010. Colin Saunders (Forestry Commission) would be taking the lead on delivering the meeting in consultation with Sector staff.</p>	
9	<p><b>Communications</b></p> <p><i>Treework website</i></p> <p>9.1 Feedback on HSE's recently launched Treework website had been almost exclusively positive. In addition, feedback on the pilot video podcast on the use of wood chippers was also extremely positive. An agreement had been reached with Myerscough College, who would be producing video podcasts for publication on HSE's website based on the AFAG suite of guidance.</p> <p><i>APF</i></p> <p>9.2 Planning for the APF event in September 2010 was also underway. A site had been identified that would allow scenarios to be run (based upon those delivered at the forestry SHADs) at the event. Forestry Training Services had agreed to contribute to this event and it was also hoped that the School of Forestry and Garroch Training would deliver scenarios based upon the recent edge tree research project.</p> <p>9.3 Simon Wallis confirmed commented that he would like to work with partners to deliver a safety competition for the APF. This opportunity would be explored with Sector staff over the next few months. <b>ACTION: Simon Wallis/HSE</b></p> <p>9.4 Alan Plom explained that participation at the APF would be branded under the AFAG logo and urged Members to take an active role in helping to develop and deliver contact for the event. <b>ACTION: Members</b></p> <p><i>Forestry Summit</i></p> <p>9.5 Jason Liggins raised the possibility of holding a Forestry Summit. This will be aimed at 'Captains' of the forestry industry, ie CEOs of leading companies and national</p>	

	<p>organisations. This would be something similar to the Paper &amp; Board Industry initiative which took place some years ago. The aim would be to “shock” them into doing more to support the good work being done by individuals within the industry and encourage not only inter-business comparison of accident rates, losses etc. but also the sharing of good practice.</p> <p>9.6 The cost of such an event is estimated at £1k and is likely to take place in late April/May at the earliest.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><b>Action: Jason Liggins</b></p>	
10	<p><b>Update on Training and Certification</b></p> <p>10.1 Simon Richmond provided an update on AFAG’s Training and Certification Project Group. A working draft revision of AFAG 805 Training and Certification had been completed which reflected the new emphasis AFAG placed on experience, consolidation, update training and other factors when assessing the competence of operators. The revised guidance should be published early in the New Year.</p> <p>10.2 Ros Burley informed Members that a two page consultation document had been published by Lantra SSC on the future of apprenticeships.</p> <p>10.3 Ros also informed Members that LSSC were undertaking further research into the demography of the tree work sector.</p> <p>10.4 Ros informed Members about the Qualifications and Credit Framework (QCF) the new framework of accreditation being introduced in England, Wales and Northern Ireland. The QCF was a unitised system with individual credit rated units. This would allow workers to build qualifications over time with accreditation accrued as units were completed. Certificates awarded to participants would detail the units completed. The framework in Scotland was currently under development.</p> <p>10.5 Members were also informed that the current NVQ qualifications would become “Work-based Diplomas”.</p> <p>10.6 Steve Hewitt then explained training and certification in the context of QCF (see full presentation on AFAG website <a href="http://www.hse.gov.uk/aboutus/meetings/iacs/aiac/afag/011209/cgpresentation.pdf">http://www.hse.gov.uk/aboutus/meetings/iacs/aiac/afag/011209/cgpresentation.pdf</a> ).</p> <p>10.7 Wayne Grills informed Members of recent developments in training and certification at Lantra Awards. The recently introduced QCF system had the potential to provide more flexible route of training and certification for the industry than previous frameworks. However, a number of issues had been highlighted at a recent Lantra Awards stakeholder meeting. Training provision needed to be more focused to the specific strands of the industry: forestry, arboriculture and utility arboriculture. In addition, there was a general acceptance in the treework industry that the existing system of training and certification was not as credible as it used to be. The focus on getting people through the assessment needs to change to allow for consolidation of training before undergoing a comprehensive assessment procedure.</p>	

10.8 Wayne informed Members that Lantra Awards had received queries regarding a number of issues, particularly refresher training. Wayne urged Members to address these issues in the revision of the relevant AFAG guidance leaflets.

**Action: Members**

10.9 Members were also asked whether the current position, ie that only one training and awarding body (NPTC) was named in AFAG and HSE guidance leaflets, was sustainable. It was Lantra Awards view that this position should be reviewed.

10.10 Graeme Walker noted the progress of the AFAG Training and Certification project group and the potential of the new QCF system to provide new avenues of training and certification for operators in the tree work sector. This would need to be reflected in guidance.

10.11 Simon Richmond then highlighted two issues. Firstly, having moved to a position for independent assessment via NPTC in 2003, was AFAG content that this should continue? Secondly, it was essential to ensure that the advantages of a 'cpd-like' system were publicised and that clear guidance was given on how businesses could respond to this new emphasis.

10.12 A number of options had been explored by the AFAG Project Group for recording career progression. A national system had been proposed which was accepted by those working in the arboriculture and utility sectors but not by the majority of those in the forestry industry.

10.13 Jim Brown then introduced two papers (AFAG/09/07 and AFAG/09/08). Jim had been in lengthy discussion with some of the major trade bodies in forestry to gain a consensus on recording career development. Those in the industry favoured the Apprenticeship/ VQ route but, in the current economic climate, this was not a commercially viable option without external funding. Therefore, Jim proposed that those in the forestry industry should be encouraged to keep a log book/portfolio which could be used to record training courses, in house training, on the job experience, attendance at SHADs and other relevant information. This would provide a valuable resource to both employees and employers. Members supported Jim's proposal which will be taken forwards early in 2010.

10.14 Donald MacLean then asked Steve Hewitt how the QCF units were assessed. Steve informed Members that the method of assessment varied depending upon the specific training unit. For example, those units containing certificates of competence would be assessed as before. Assessments in the use of self propelled machinery would be assessed by the FMO route. Other units would be assessed through practical observation.

10.15 Members were informed that previous learning and qualification could be transferred to the new framework if the appropriate evidence required could be provided. However, the precise mechanism for this was still under discussion.

10.16 Alan Plom noted that all in the industry had a responsibility to promote AFAG's new emphasis on the continual development (and recording) of skills throughout the career of an individual. Steve Hewitt advised that the new 'rules of combination' inherent

	<p>in QCF, which allows a flexible route of training and certification to suit employers and employees requirements, would help in enabling businesses to follow this type of path.</p> <p>10.17 Simon Wallis suggested that the business benefits of a 'cpd-like' system should be emphasised.</p> <p>10.18 Alan Plom suggested that greater impact could be made of arb client SHADs in driving up standards and competence and that extra resource was being sought for a cross - sector approach targeting the procurement of contractors by LAs.</p> <p>10.19 Members also noted that more needed to be done to promote the value of consolidation of training prior to assessment.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><b>ACTION: Simon Richmond/Project Group/HSE</b></p>	
11	<p><b>Any Other Business</b></p> <p>11.1 Simon Richmond updated Members on the progress of the National Tree Safety Group (NTSG). Simon is to arrange for the Chair of the Group, Judith Web to contact Marcia Davies concerning the Group's Terms of Reference and Position Statement.</p>	
12	<p><b>Date &amp; Venue for next (18<sup>th</sup>) AFAG meeting</b></p> <p>Agreed to be held on Thursday 6 May 2010 at:  Bartlett Tree Experts,  South of England Centre  Ardingly  West Sussex  RH17 6TL</p>	