

**HEALTH AND SAFETY COMMISSION
AGRICULTURE INDUSTRY ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

ARBORICULTURE AND FORESTRY ADVISORY GROUP (AFAG)

The minutes of the 10th meeting of the AIAC sub-committee on Arboriculture and Forestry, held on 7 March 2006 at HSE, Stoneleigh Park, Kenilworth, Warwickshire.

Present:

Dr Roger Nourish	HSE (Chair)
Mr Alan Plom	HSE (Sec)
Mr Jim Dewar	FC (Technical Secretary)
Mr Jim Brown	FTA
Mr Simon Richmond	Lantra Awards
Mr Neil McKay	ICF/ UKFPA
Mr Bruce Hatton	AA
Mr Hans Fairley	AEA
Mr Alun Jones	FCA (sub)
Mr Adrian Kingsbury	NATO
Mrs Frances Hirst	HSE
Miss Jennifer Phillips-Nairne	HSE (Minutes Sec)

Apologies: Gerald Bonner (TCIA), Joanne McAuley (FC), Robert Beaney (FC), Emily Ramsay (FC), Liz Stewart (FC), Jason Liggins (HSE), Garry Miller (HSE), Brendan Burns (FCA), Edward Shephard (FC), Donald Maclean (FCA), Joe Bradley (DANI) and Keith Leech (Euroforest - who has resigned from AFAG).

1. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTION

1.1 The Chairman welcomed Adrian Kingsbury (National Association of Tree Officers), Hans Fairley (AEA) and Alun Jones (attending on behalf of Donald Maclean, FCA).

1.2 **Resignation of Keith Leech** - The Group expressed regret at Keith's resignation, due to his company's withdrawal from UKFPA. Roger Nourish to write to Keith on behalf of AFAG thanking him for his valuable contributions.

ACTION- R Nourish

1.3 **Membership** - Jim Dewar raised concerns that several members (particularly from the TU side of FC) and FCA had consistently failed to attend meetings. He suggested that a note should be sent by the Secretary to Edward Shephard (FC's TU Side Secretary) requesting the details of those able and willing to attend future meetings.

ACTION- A Plom

1.4 **Local Authorities** - The importance of representation from LAs had been raised previously. LA representation was needed on both the main Committee and the training and certification group. Ideally this should be someone with both practical and strategic experience. Alan Plom had contacted the LA Employers Organisation which resulted in two other potential nominees: John Murphy from London Borough of Merton (who manages the

LA Contractors H&S Scheme - CHAS) and John Price from Milton Keynes Council. John Price has an arb background and Bruce Hatton advised that he also sits on the Arboricultural Association Committee. In view of the particular issues that need to be addressed in LAs, Simon Richmond recommended inviting both to the T&C group, in addition to Adrian (from Newcastle-under-Lyme DC).

ACTION – A Plom

1.5 Utility Arboriculture – Members considered that representation is also needed from the utility arb sector. One suggestion was Graham Bell from Scottish Power. Simon Richmond is to ask the AA's Utility Arb Group to put forward a nomination.

ACTION- S Richmond

1.6 Size of AFAG - Roger Nourish was concerned that AFAG should not become too big and reminded members of HSC's rules governing IACs. Additional representatives should be invited to share their expertise by being co-opted on to relevant working groups.

2. URGENT BUSINESS

2.1 HSE's moratorium on research - Discussed under item 7.

3. MINUTES OF THE 9th MEETING

3.1 The draft minutes of the 9th meeting had been distributed by e-mail but some members had not received the final draft before the meeting. Copies were available at the meeting HSE Minutes Secretary to send out copies to all members for comment.

ACTION- J Phillips-Nairne

3.2 Jim Brown suggested setting a finite date for issue and receipt of comments on draft minutes. This is under consideration, in line with AIAC's targets. Alan Plom advised that AFAG papers are also now available via the AIAC pages on the HSE website. HSE Minutes Secretary to send website address link to members.

ACTION - J Phillips-Nairne/A Plom

4. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE 9th Meeting (9 November 2005)

All actions carried out, discharged, or on the agenda. Points noted were:

4.1 Min 4.2- Causes of Accidents - Roger advised that a date had not been set for the proposed meeting with Finance Sector. Ongoing.

ACTION- R Nourish

4.2 Min 4.3- LA Rep for AFAG- Three nominations received. Discussed at 1.4 above.

ACTION- A Plom

4.3 Min 4.4 - AFAG 404 – Comments (eventually) received and substantial redraft needed. Frances Hirst is taking this over from Garry Miller and would convene a meeting to reconcile the various comments.

ACTION – F Hirst

4.4 Min 5.2- Accident Statistics - Meeting held with Bomel. Discussed under Item 6.

4.5 Min 5.3- HSE's Projects - Discussed under Item 5.

4.6 Min 6.2- Hand Arm Vibration (HAV), Whole Body Vibration (WBV) and Noise - Paul Brereton's powerpoint presentation not posted to members due to size-will be placed on AFAG website in due course.

ACTION- A Plom

4.7 Min 5.5 Project Plans - Project Plans are still needed for A2, B2, B3, B6, B7, C2, D1 and D2.

ACTION – Project Leaders

4.8 Min 5.5 B1- Steep Ground Working - Guidance progressing and almost finalised.

4.9 Min 5.5 B6- Chain Saw PPE - Concerns were expressed re conflicting advice being given by inspectors. HSE is amending AFAG 301 to include the text on risk assessment for the wearing of gloves which was agreed by members at AFAG's 9th meeting. Frances Hirst had also included the text in the revised INDG 317- *Chainsaws at Work*.

4.10 Min 5.5 B7- Market Surveillance - Jim Brown had no feedback at present. Further information is likely to be available after APF in September.

4.11 Min 5.5 C2- MSD - Bruce Hatton reviewing statistics and awaiting updates.

4.12 Min 5.5 C3- HAV, WBV and Noise - WBV Workshop has taken place at HSL Buxton.

4.13 Min 5.5 C4- Pesticides - Working Group set up.

4.14 Min 5.5 D1- Promotion of Best Practice in Arb - Falls within Bruce Hatton's review. Other avenues under review by the industry's own Arb Liaison Group.

4.15 Min 6.3- Pesticides - Roger Nourish apologised for the tone of the paper and associated presentation at the last AFAG meeting. This had not been cleared with the Sector. Jim Dewar accepted these apologies on behalf of the FC and it was agreed this topic would now be progressed through the Pesticides Working Group.

4.16 Min 6.4- Other Research - Agenda Item 7.

4.17 Min 9 Update from the Arboriculture Industry Liaison Group - Gary Miller has still to contact the ODPM. Bruce Hatton is to forward a copy of a Highways Agency Tree Inspection questionnaire for circulation to Members.

ACTION- F Hirst (G Miller)/B Hatton

4.18 Min 13.1 VAT on PPE - Jim Brown is pursuing the issue of VAT on PPE. Paper AFAG/05/06 was presented to the last meeting of AIAC and HSE had identified the appropriate Department (HM Revenue and Customs). AFAG to follow up and gauge reaction. AFAG guides 301, 401 and INDG 317 provide the evidence that PPE must be worn.

ACTION – Jim Brown

4.19 Min 13.2 Migrant Workers - Jim Brown has been introduced to and discussed this with HSE's Graeme Walker.

5. AFAG TERMS OF REFERENCE AND WORKPLAN 2005-08 (rev)

5.1 Workplan

5.1.1 AFAG/06/01 summarises the AFAG work programme for 2005-2008 updated following the AIAC meeting and it now includes all available Project Plans. Roger expressed his thanks to Alan for putting together the Work Programme in particular the Risk Register. The issues identified apply across all Ag Sector projects. It outlines what HSE can do in terms of support, resources and budget and highlights what we are doing in partnership with stakeholders. This will be a useful tool when requesting funding, eg for research.

5.1.2 Jim Dewar suggested putting a value on the contributions made by AFAG members, whether in cash or kind. This was seen to add extra value and would strengthen Appendix A. A 'Resource Box' could be added to each project plan. Alan Plom to circulate revised form to Project Leaders and all members to estimate their time/contribution.

ACTION- A Plom/All Members

5.1.3 Alan Plom reminded Project Leaders that plans are still needed for Projects A2, B2, B3, B6, B7, C2, D1 and D2, and to bear in mind the Risk Table when drafting their plans.

ACTION – Project Leaders

5.2 Funding

5.2.1 Roger Nourish explained the position on HSE funding for the coming year. Despite HSE's considerable funding constraints the Sector's staffing remains intact, but the Communications budget is still under negotiation. This had been significantly reduced, putting at risk the delivery of SHADs and does not allow for any publications. Geoffrey Podger (HSE's Chief Executive) was supportive and up to £100,000 had been made available to fund HSE's attendance at the 3 'national' Royal Shows in addition to APF, Saltex and 2 other (agricultural) events. The 3 Forestry & 4 Arb SHAD's are still proposed but Ag SHAD's would be reduced to 6, ie one per Division.

5.2.2 Members of AFAG expressed their concerns at the significant implications of the funding constraints on the Communications Strategy. Roger advised that Madge Moore (Lantra Rep on AIAC) had already written to Bill Callaghan (HSC Chair) advising him that cuts on this scale are unacceptable. She had copied this to other AIAC members, some responding by relaying their concerns to HSE's Chief Executive.

5.3 HSE Inspector and HSAO Resource for 06/07

5.3.1 Members asked what this meant for HSE inspections and other work. Roger reminded members that Agriculture was no longer a stand alone priority programme but now primarily contributed to the HSE's FIT3 ("Fit for work, Fit for life and Fit for the future") Programme and associated projects. For 2005/06 and 06/07 the Ag/Food Sector's staffing had remained at previous levels or a slight increase, reflecting the importance attached to HSC's strategy of "working with and through others" and our stakeholder engagement work including AIAC and AFAG Committees and project groups. However, in terms of Operational (Field) Inspector input, these changes had brought a reduction in overall resource

for Agriculture from circa 80 inspector years in previous years to about 35 inspector years in 2005/06. Roughly half of this resource was related to reactive work (i.e investigation of reported accidents and complaints) and the other half to a much-reduced programme of proactive inspection projects. Operational resource input for 2006/07 had yet to be finalised but the Sector anticipated further reductions in proactive inspection work. However, HSAOs are becoming more active in the Arb project, raising awareness and providing advice.

5.3.2 Members were worried that this reduction in resources and expertise will reduce the level of enforcement, which they considered vital to maintain standards let alone improve them. To help overcome this decline it was considered an adequate Communications budget is even more important. The Group felt that the only way forward in light of the limited resources would be to concentrate on SHADs which are less confrontational, well received and research has shown are very effective. However members expressed their concerns that there may be a danger of losing ground on the gains already made in the industry as a result of a reduction in enforcement.

5.4. Report on HSE Forestry & Arb Projects

5.4.1 **Arboriculture project** - Frances Hirst reported on progress with part one of the which involves HSAOs contacting arboricultural contractors to raise awareness of key health and safety issues, including the Work at Height Regulations 2005, Lifting Operations and Lifting Equipment Regs 1998, Employers Liability Compulsory Insurance, training and certification and AFAG guidance. Initial contact is by letter with follow up in some cases either by telephone or visit. The project is now in its second year and most HSE divisions have begun work on this. An article giving details of the project and which can be used in the local press is being drafted. This will be circulated to members when it is finalised.

ACTION- F Hirst

5.4.2 Frances introduced AFAG 06/04, giving details and an evaluation of the programme of 'Engaging Arb Client' SHADs. Four will have taken place by the end of March 06 and 4 more are planned for 06/07, the first at Shuttleworth College, Beds on 16 May. Members were asked to suggest an effective way of evaluating the long term impact of SHADs.

ACTION - Members

5.4.3 **Forestry Project** - Three Forestry SHADs were planned for 05/06 but due to delays in Forest Training Services organising the venues and non-availability of instructors, these will be now be run on 20th April in Scotland, 25th April in Wales and 4th May in NE England. Three more SHAD's are being planned, one in each country, later in the year.

5.4.4 Members asked for details of the number of HSAO's allocated to these projects nationally. Frances will provide this information.

ACTION- F Hirst

6. REVIEW OF AFAG PROJECTS

A1-Examination of underlying and root causes of serious accidents

6.1 Jim Dewar reported on behalf of the Group. Emily Ramsay and Jason Liggins have had a preliminary meeting with Bomel to discuss their analysis of available data. This will inform all other AFAG projects and Bomel will be asked to report back at next meeting of AFAG.

ACTION- J Liggins & E Ramsay

A2 Training & Certificates of Competence

6.2 Simon Richmond reported 2 meetings had already taken place (on 7th December and 24th January) and the next is planned for 25th April. The Group had completed Objective 1 – ‘Identify existing training and certification routes’. Objective 2 – ‘Examine other, existing models of career progression routes and registration schemes (outwith forestry / arboriculture)’, is partly complete. The next stage is to prepare a consultation document outlining the options and circulate it to the industry. This will have cost implications and Simon asked whether HSE would be willing to fund the exercise. It was agreed that the Sector could handle this administratively. Jim Brown queried the scope of the consultation, ie would it be extended beyond the trees and timber industry.

ACTION – S Richmond/Project Group to consider

6.3 Mapping of European Standards - Jim Dewar described the mapping exercise commissioned by FC looking at forestry machine operators certification. This compared schemes in 4 countries, to identify the benefits of alternative systems. The findings are to be discussed at the next Project Group meeting, and the paper sent to NPTC in advance.

6.4 This issue is difficult to pursue because of the cross-industry interests, particularly relating to migrant workers. Simon Richmond explained this aspect overlapped with the AIAC’s Casual and Temporary Workers Project, who would now take the lead. However, Simon’s workload is still too high and he would need to stand down as chair of this part of the project.

6.5 Bruce Hatton informed Members that the Major House Builders Group have a new workforce initiative. If they see that the work that we are doing is beneficial they will recommend it to their members. Jim Dewar is also now on a WG looking at competitiveness in the forestry industry and the issues they are looking at include education. Jim is to write to the group about AFAG’s interest.

ACTION- J Dewar

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

6.6 Neil McKay reported that this project is nearing completion. The guidance is almost ready for publication and will be formally launched at APF in September.

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

6.7 No progress to date. Contact to be made with Paul Elcoat. Simon Richmond to find Paul’s personal details and contact him.

ACTION- S Richmond

B4. Rigging & dismantling techniques in arboriculture.

6.8 Frances Hirst reported that HSE’s research tender board had met but was waiting for a decision following HSE’s moratorium on new research before the tender could be let. Jim Dewar was concerned that as this is a joint-funded project with FC, if HSE funding is not

forthcoming then FC's budget would be affected. Jim intended to send a strongly worded e-mail via Frances.

ACTION- J Dewar

B5. Machine-Assisted Take-Down of Trees

6.9 Formerly known as “*Winch assisted felling- Forces encountered using winches and development of safe systems of work*”, this Group is now looking at other (machine-assisted) methods of take-down. The aims are to improve existing methods, get rid of unapproved methods and evaluate new techniques. HSE are aware of 2 recent fatalities involving winches. An industry wide meeting had been held in February and following initial research, the existing guidance will need to be expanded to include other techniques. FC funding is available and AFAG will be used to gain industry support. Completion date for the research is estimated to be March 07 and the draft guidance should be made available asap.

B6. Chainsaw PPE- To improve and promote standards and related issues

6.10 No meetings held. Detailed accident analysis may indicate a possible change in advice needed on type of chainsaw trousers. Hans Fairley advised the group that Stihl are developing lighter trousers that provide the same level of protection as those routinely used. AFAG 301 is to be revised to include new guidance on gloves, but the agreed text has already been included in INDG 317. Members to be advised of current status of reprint of AFAG 301.

ACTION- F Hirst

6.11 Due to pressure of work, Simon Richmond is also to stand down as chair of this group. A replacement is needed and Members were asked to volunteer/suggest a suitable person.

ACTION – Members/A Plom & R Nourish

C1 Promotion of Rehabilitation Services

6.12 Nothing to report. Jason Liggins proposed to link this with the *Healthy Working Lives* initiative in Scotland.

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

6.13 This group is waiting for the accident analysis information from Bomel. Bruce Hatton has also contacted Paolo Baveresco about joining the group.

ACTION – Bruce Hatton to follow up.

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

6.14 **WBV** - Jim Dewar reported on the Working Group meeting held in January at HSL. HSL have measured whole body exposure on a variety of machines and further measurements are planned. Paul Brereton's article on WBV is almost complete. The APF show will be used as a showcase to raise awareness of WBV and the practical control measures available to minimise risk and back injury, using a demonstration of HSLs 'vibrating seat'.

6.15 **HAV** - No meeting held on this topic but Alan Plom advised that the profile of HAVs/WBVs in the industry had been raised within HSE, when the high levels of exposures were discussed at a national conference on noise and vibration. Members briefly discussed exposure limits/times and the need to provide simplified information for machinery users. Bruce Hatton suggested chainsaws should be labelled to indicate the risk of exposure and a leaflet should be provided. This was tied up in standards, but Jim Dewar referred to a presentation he gave on this topic to the ISO committee dealing with chainsaws.

6.16 **Noise** - Jim Dewar informed Members that more research on noise is proposed at HSL, eg on woodchippers.

C4. Reduce exposure to pesticides used in tree planting

6.17 The Working Group is to review the research reported at the previous AFAG meeting, to identify and promulgate the key messages to the appropriate duty holders.

D1. Promotion of arboricultural best practice amongst key client groups

6.18 Bruce Hatton informed Members that he was looking at this project with a view to effectively communicating with the workforce and contractors/managers. It was suggested that guidance and information could be provided to contractors via insurance brokers. This would be raised at the proposed Finance conference.

6.19 Frances Hirst asked Members for material and suggestions for items to be covered in the next edition of Arb News, asap.

ACTION - Members

D2. Production, review and maintenance of AFAG, HSE and industry guidance

6.20 Jim Brown informed Members that the draft excavator guidance was still under consultation. Bruce Hatton and Simon Richmond expressed concern that the web-based approach to providing guidance was proving ineffective. AFAG guidance notes were not being downloaded by the chief target audience in the industry because they are not web-literate and many colleges remain unaware of the AFAG guides. Bruce suggested that the guidance could be circulated via insurance brokers. He has prepared a paper which he would provide to Group members for discussion.

ACTION – B Hatton

6.21 Alun Jones suggested incorporating all current guidance into one publication. Roger raised the possibility of approaching the Insurance Sector for sponsorship for HSE publications.

ACTION – R Nourish/B Hatton

7. RESEARCH UPDATE

7.1 Frances Hirst reported that she was meeting Treevolution Ltd on 19 May with Chris Gallagher (HSE Safety Unit) and David Thomas (Construction Division Technology Unit) to discuss the current position on rope access and work positioning in arboriculture. The tender board for the research on Evaluation of Current Rigging and Dismantling Practices used in Arboriculture had met on 2 March but was awaiting a decision following the moratorium on

research before the work can be commissioned. Frances is also to attend the AA working group on safe working with MEWPs on 29 March.

8. FORESTRY & ARB RELATED STANDARDS WORK - Update

8.1 Jim Dewar reported on the ISO meeting in Japan on ROPS for excavators. The majority of attendees were manufacturers from construction sector and they did not accept the UK's recommendations. He is concerned that they are happy to accept a retrofit kit capable of only withstanding 1.3 x machine weight rather than twice machine weight advocated by UK. He has now attended 5 meetings with representatives from 15 countries. He has been the only 'user' rep, and there have been no regulators. A further meeting is to be held in Finland in June and he felt that a stronger case could be argued if HSE was present.

ACTION – A Plom/R Nourish

8.2 Due to a change in his responsibilities within FC Jim will have to withdraw from the ISO working group and 95% of his standards work. He would also be unable to attend all future AFAG meetings. He would be replaced by Graham Sanders on the BSI and ISO committees and represented by Graham Munford (FE) at AFAG meetings in England. Jim would review and update the summary of standards work in AFAG 05/03.

ACTION- J DEWAR

9. ARBORICULTURE LIAISON GROUP - Update

9.1 The Group has not met since the last meeting. Next meeting scheduled for 29th March.

10. REVIEW OF ARB CLIENT SHADS

10.1 Dealt with under item 5.4

11. PROGRESS OF AFAG PUBLICATIONS

11.1 Frances Hirst reported that:

- IND G 317 *Chainsaws at Work* was due to be published by the end of March. The main revisions were: inclusion of tutor to trainee ratios and the revised guidance on glove use agreed at the last AFAG meeting.
- AIS 30 *Application of LOLER to arboriculture* had been revised to include brief advice on the WAH regs.
- AFAG 404 *Utility Arboriculture* - Following the consultation exercise further work is needed to complete this guidance. A meeting of interested parties will be convened.

These documents will all be published on and available to download from the HSE web site.

12. AFAG COMMUNICATIONS POLICY

12.1 This was briefly discussed under Project D2 – as reported above. A more detailed discussion is needed at the next meeting. Bruce Hatton has prepared a paper which he will provide to members as a basis for discussion.

ACTION – B Hatton

12.2 Alan Plom confirmed that HSE had committed to use their mobile exhibition unit at APF and reminded members of the proposal at the previous meeting that AFAG members

should be available on the stand to meet visitors and promote AFAG and its new and existing guidance. It was also proposed to present a summary of AFAG projects in an hour-long session in the Education/Seminar tent and this would be advertised in the programme. The format needs to be finalised, but it was suggested that AFAG members from industry speaking on their projects would be most effective. A rota of AFAG members also needs to be drawn up and a press release drafted to publicise which and when AFAG members will be available on the stand to discuss the industry's concerns. All Members to consider availability and inform A Plom + J Liggins.

ACTION – All Members

13. AOB

13.1 **Future Safety ATV/Forestry Helmets** - Simon Richmond reported that Future Safety had given Lantra Awards instructors a sample of their Safety Helmets, previously described to AFAG members and in a note issued by HSE. Although reports had been fairly positive, there was some negative feedback, mainly about the peak and wearability. Alan Plom explained that Future Safety had commissioned HSL to ensure that it complied with the various relevant standards, so this was new and interesting information. Simon agreed to provide further information.

ACTION – S Richmond

14. DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

To be arranged for the beginning of September 2006, before APF.

ACTION: A.Plom