

AFAG/06/M11

**HEALTH AND SAFETY COMMISSION
AGRICULTURE INDUSTRY ADVISORY COMMITTEE
ARBORICULTURE AND FORESTRY ADVISORY GROUP (AFAG)**

Minutes of 11th meeting, held at Forestry Commission HQ, Edinburgh, 16 August 2006

Present:

Roger Nourish	HSE (Chair)
Alan Plom	HSE (Sec)
Jim Dewar	FC (Technical Secretary)
Jim Brown	UKFPA/FTA (AIAC rep)
Simon Richmond	Lantra Awards
Brendan Burns	FCA
Emily Ramsey	FC
Paul Elcoat	ISA
Richard Beaney	TGWU
John Broach	TGWU
Steve Osbourne	PCS
Graeme Hodgson	Observer/contractor
Frances Hurst	HSE
Jason Liggins	HSE
Nikki Jack	HSE (Minutes Sec)

1. WELCOME AND APOLOGIES:

Roger Nourish welcomed everyone to the meeting, particularly Paul Elcoat on his return and other new delegates. He also thanked FC for hosting AFAG once again. Unfortunately, due to the travel difficulties, Natasha Perry (Bomel) was unable to get her flight, but Jason Liggins (HSE) would present a summary of Bomel's research findings. Hans Fairley (AEA), Gerald Bonner (TCIA), Joseph Bradley (Northern Ireland Forest Service) and Jennifer Phillips-Nairn (HSE Min Sec) had also sent their apologies.

2. URGENT BUSINESS

Following the introductions it was agreed that representation on AFAG needed clarification and rationalisation, to limit overall numbers attending. Chair emphasised that non-members of main-AFAG would still be welcome to participate in Project Groups, where their views and expertise would be particularly effective.

ACTION : HSE

3. MINUTES OF THE 10TH MEETING (7/3/06)

Minutes agreed

4. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE 10TH MEETING

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

4.2 Minute 1.4 – LA Representation - Discharged. Unfortunately the LA representatives were unable to attend the meeting. Further discussions will take place to decide which reps will attend. **ACTION: A Plom**

4.3 Minute 1.5 – Utility Rep – Simon Richmond had informed the Utility Arb Group (UAG) at their last meeting that it was proposed that one member should attend AFAG, but unfortunately, the UAG minutes didn't reflect this and there had been no response to date. Brian Bell (of Scottish Power, an arborist and representative for the Utility Companies) is willing to attend AFAG but he is not currently a member of the UAG. Simon to pursue this with the UAG. **ACTION: S Richmond**

4.4 Minute 4.1 – Finance/Insurance Sector Seminar– Still being developed. See note of detailed discussion at Min 4.17.

4.5 Minute 4.17 – Tree Inspections/Arb Industry Liaison Group – Bruce Hatton had sent a copy of the Highways Agency's Tree Inspection questionnaire for circulation to Members. Not known if Gary Miller had contacted the ODPM (now DCLG) to clarify their position on tree inspections. **ACTION: J Liggins**

4.6 Minute 4.18 – VAT on PPE – Jim Brown reported this had been followed up with HMRC but referred back to HSE to see whether it would affect other industries. Jason is liaising with Phil Pappard of HSE's Safety Unit to find the best way forward. HSE has not been involved with this issue before. It will take a concerted effort from interested parties to persuade HMRC to change the legislation. Brendan Burns suggested contacting the Federation of Small Businesses. Details to be mailed to Jason. **ACTION: B Burns/J Liggins**

4.7 Minute 5.1.2 & 3 – AFAG Work Plan/Project Plans - Agenda item 7

4.8 Minute 5.4.1 & 2 – HSE Arboriculture Project – Article for members to use in newsletters, etc, circulated by Frances. Members invited to suggest ways to evaluate SHADs. **ACTION: All Members**

4.9 Minute 5.4.4 - HSE Projects/HSAO Resource – Discussions on allocation of resources for 07/08 are still underway and yet to be confirmed. **ACTION : F Hirst**

4.10 Minute 6.3 – Project A2 Mapping of European Standards - Jim Dewar had informed the Working Group on competitiveness in forestry of AFAG's interest, but this has not yet been taken forward by AFAG due to work commitments preventing Jo Bradley taking the lead. Simon had been unable to find an alternative. It was agreed that we need to compare standards between countries and that a review of the NOS's was needed, but this need not stop us mapping (task-oriented) qualifications meanwhile. A pilot project was proposed to compare tasks vs CoC's. However, until a volunteer to lead the project and funding is found this cannot be taken forward. Jim Dewar thought the FC might have some money available in their 07/08 budget. **ACTION: J Dewar/S Richmond**

4.11 Minute 6.7 - B2 Work at height – Paul Elcoat now unable to lead on this as he has changed his role within the industry. Topic further discussed under agenda item 7.

4.12 Minute 6.8 – B4 Rigging and dismantling techniques – Discharged. This was one of few research projects HSE had agreed to fund. Chair thanked Jim Dewar for writing to HSE voicing the industry’s concerns and confirming FC’s commitment to co-fund the work with HSE.

4.13 Minute 6.10 & 6.11 - B6 Chainsaw PPE – Members were advised that AFAG 301 could not be changed until next reprinted but inspectors had been informed of the agreed new text. Jim Brown agreed to take over from Simon as lead on this group. **ACTION: HSE**

4.14 Minute 6.13 – C2 MSD – No update available as Bruce was unable to attend. Accident analysis information from Bomel needed. Bruce was to contact Paolo Baveresco about joining the group. Confirmation required. **ACTION: B Hatton**

4.15 Minute 6.19 – D1 Promotion of arb best practice – Chair thanked members for their contributions to Arb News. Frances confirmed that the next edition would be published in October. Alan suggested that feedback on content and usefulness of this publication would be beneficial. **ACTION: F Hirst/All Members**

4.16 Minute 6.20 – D2 Production, review and maintenance of guidance – Bruce Hatton’s paper AFAG 06/05 proposed engaging insurance brokers. HSE suggested this should be carried forward as part of HSE’s proposed Insurance Initiative (see Min 4.17 below). In Bruce’s absence the paper was not discussed in detail – deferred to next meeting.

ACTION : R Nourish/B Hatton

4.17 Minute 6.21 – Insurance Initiative – AFAG had previously requested that the insurance industry should be approached to sponsor the production of a single ‘*Essentials of Health and Safety*’-type publication incorporating all current guidance. Roger advised that this would be better funded collectively by insurers to encourage wider use by all insurance companies involved in the industry, rather than just the company who had ‘badged’ it. This proposal had been deferred until HSE’s discussions with the insurance industry on the proposed seminar and possible outcomes had progressed. Roger reminded the group that the aim of this project is to work with insurers to identify ways to enable them to ‘incentivise’ businesses to reduce and manage risks better, eg by recognising relevant qualifications and competence, promoting adoption of good practices, training etc, and by rewarding compliant customers accordingly, eg by reflecting real reductions in risks in their premiums.

4.18 HSE has tried unsuccessfully to approach the insurance industry in the past so before he approached the ABI’s Nick Starling formally (with a view to ABI possibly hosting a seminar for insurers), Roger first wanted to meet with other interested parties. Good progress had been made and a number of insurers and key individuals had been contacted, including the NFU Mutual, AXA, HSE’s Chief Exec and Deputy Chief Exec, the Financial Director of Lantra SSC and CMi, who develop risk assessment packages for underwriters.

4.19 Roger asked Members to give some thought to possible case studies and ideas that could be presented at the seminar. Brendan reported very different approaches towards risk assessment by different brokers/underwriters, but there appears to be increasing recognition of good practice by insurers. Paul referred to one arb company’s premiums being reduced by 25-30%, reflecting the extent of training and type/duration of work they undertook for an LA.

ACTION: Members

4.20 Members agreed that practical guidance on risk assessment was needed, supported by verification/auditing. Members felt they should be consulted on what topics should be included in any industry-related risk assessment package. Alan recalled that in addition to a version of '*Essentials of Health and Safety*' for Arb and Forestry it had been suggested that HSE's self-assessment software and CDROM for farmers could be adapted for the industry. These ideas should be considered further by the 'Communications' project group D1.

ACTION : B Hatton/HSE

4.21 Minute 8.1 – HSE representation at Standards meetings – HSE's Dr Gibby (Director of Injury Reduction Programme and Chair of AIAC) had accepted AFAG's 'business case' for HSE to support the UK delegation and had given approval for Jason to attend the ISO meetings in Finland in June. See report of meeting at Item 9 (and Min 9.4/9.5 in particular, on HSE support).

4.22 Minute 13.1 - Future Safety ATV/Forestry Helmets – Simon had received feedback that this design was not suitable for arborists. See report on Project B7 at Item 7.

5. AFAG TERMS OF REFERENCE AND WORKPLAN 2005-08

5.1 Chair gave an update on HSE's programme of work and resources and the implications of HSE's current financial position. Funding and resources for projects and research was now based on their potential contribution to HSE's PSA targets. Support from stakeholders is crucial and he thanked those that attended the AIAC meeting for their support.

6. REPORT ON RESEARCH BY BOMEL

6.1 Unfortunately Natasha Perry had been unable to get a flight so Jason summarised her proposed presentation. A key element of Bomel's research is the comprehensive accident analysis as this will inform most if not all AFAG Projects. This included all industries using chain saws, etc. The other key element is the development of the Barometer of Cultural Change for forestry, initially developed by Bomel for the Agriculture Sector. The 'influence network' in forestry had been identified and this had been used to target the audience for the series of workshops being held. The results of the pre- and post-SHAD evaluations would be reported back to AFAG in due course.

ACTION: J Liggins

6.2 This research is vital to counter the view held by some in the industry that accident levels are now low so they do not merit attention. However, incident rates are still high, and a key trend identified is that the age profile of those injured is different to agriculture. This research will help us to identify behavioural influences that HSE/AFAG can target to further reduce injuries and ill health.

6.3 Chair warned that there are disadvantages in focusing on RIDDOR data alone due to the severe under reporting of accidents by the agriculture industry as a whole - up to as much as 80% under reporting for employers, and 95% for the self employed. The only reliable data comes from fatalities, but the Labour Force Survey was indicative of the true scale of the problem.

6.4 Following discussion, several issues are to be fed back to Bomel and answered in a briefing note to be provided for members. Key areas that AFAG needs information on in order to develop guidance and focus publicity are:

- a) which industry the injury stats cover, ie forestry, arboriculture or both (treework), as well as other industries using arb/forestry equipment;
- b) the IPs specific occupation, and
- c) what training and certificates are held by the IP.

ACTION: J Liggins

6.5 Simon raised a further significant question: Is sufficient guidance already available and if there is, then why isn't it being complied with? Jim Brown suggested that it would be beneficial for *more* statistical information to be divulged to the industry as this may create a bigger impact and reduce employers/employees reluctance to report incidents. It was noted that the Bomel report was still in draft and all comments would be fed back to Natasha.

ACTION: J Liggins

7. REVIEW OF AFAG PROJECTS

7.1 A brief update on each project was given by Project Leaders at the meeting:

A1 – Review and analysis of accident statistics

7.2 Following the initial meetings, the next key stage for this group is the chainsaw workshops which have come out of BOMEL's research. These start on 7 November and the UKFPA had agreed to assist in ensuring adequate numbers of chainsaw operators from a range of backgrounds attend. Hans Fairley had asked to be copied in.

ACTION : E Ramsay/J Liggins

A2 – Training and Certification

7.3 Simon introduced the 'Position Paper' (AFAG 06/06 and associated summary of comments). It was stressed that these are 'Closed' papers, ie not for circulation beyond AFAG members. The Position Paper sets out what the project group has done and the key issues discussed so far. Alan Plom had also collated and circulated the comments received from Group members while Simon was on holiday. These had not been incorporated in the Position Paper. Issues and concerns raised surrounded CPD, updating/refresher training vs re-certification and the role of Lantra and NPTC.

7.4 Members agreed that industry-wide consultation and agreement was necessary to carry this work forward. Although the project group had reached a decision on their preferred option the consultation exercise must allow the industry to reach its own decision. It was agreed it should be presented as a 'discussion paper' asking the industry for its views, examples of current practices and any difficulties.

7.5 As expected, the responses received from group members made it clear that a serious debate will need to be held on whether any new scheme is voluntary or mandatory. The better option is probably to introduce a voluntary scheme in the first instance. Simon accepted that the position paper could be debated further but as there is limited time, he proposed to convert this into a 'Discussion Paper' to present to the industry, seeking their comments. Any further comments from other AFAG members to be fed back to Alan, asap.

ACTION: All Members

7.6 Simon advised that open questions are best, asking industry for their ideas and what they want. HSC/E's standard consultation period is 3 months. Members agreed the questionnaire/consultation exercise should be launched at the APF Seminar to enable this to be completed before the next meeting. Copies of the questionnaire should be available for visitors to APF as well as at the Seminar and sent to the press. It should also be fed into NPTC's review.

7.7 Jim Brown volunteered to compose the questions to prompt discussion at the APF Seminar. Draft to be sent to the group for consultation. **ACTION: J Brown**

B1- Steep Ground Working

7.8 Following discussions with industry the new AFAG leaflet will be available from 17/08/06 and will also be launched at the APF Seminar. The next stage will be a review of relevant training and certification. **ACTION : J Liggins/N Mackay**

B2 - Management of Working at Heights

7.9 Currently being dealt with reactively only. The AA's MEWP Working Group has met twice and this work is progressing. Paul Elcoat agreed that a bullet point list of the outcomes is required, and then this can be taken forward. **ACTION : P Elcoat/F Hirst**

B3 – Welfare Provisions

7.10 Jason proposed that welfare provisions on forestry sites should be examined as part of the 'Reducing exposure to pesticides' Project. It was agreed that the project plan should be amended to reflect this. The project group would be convened as soon as the HSE Specialist's report (previously discussed at AFAG) had been released. This study examined worker exposure to pesticides during planting of saplings pre-treated with alpha-cypermethrin.

ACTION : J Liggins

B4 Rigging and Dismantling Techniques

7.11 Frances reported that the first quarterly report on the research is due out soon. Due to the project's late start the final report will be delayed until approx May '07. A further 6 months would be required to produce the practical AFAG guidance.

B5 – Machine-Assisted Take-Down

7.12 Jim Dewar informed Members that good progress had been made in the early stages of this project. It had been broadened from 'winch-assisted felling' to consider other techniques, eg use of harvesters. The initial research was extremely useful but further work is required. However, funding was currently unavailable (within FC or HSE) to initiate this so any guidance would be delayed until next financial year. The project's priority rating was reluctantly changed to B. **ACTION : HSE**

B6 - Chainsaw PPE

7.13 **Gloves** - The debate over use of gloves when using a chainsaw had been resolved and AFAG 301 would be amended when reprinted. Meanwhile FOD (and LA) inspectors had been informed of the proposed changes and informed that they should adopt the new approach when inspecting or considering enforcement action.

7.14 **VAT** - The question of VAT on chainsaw gloves was still ongoing. Jim Brown and Jason are still pursuing, through HSE's Safety Unit.

7.15 **Trousers** - Frances confirmed the current guidance that Type C chainsaw trousers should be worn for aerial tree work as Type A are not appropriate. This information is to be fed back to inspectors. The position re application of the Data Protection Act needs to be checked before manufacturer/product information can be released to AFAG members.

ACTION: F Hirst.

7.16 Jim Brown agreed to take over from Simon as lead on the chainsaw PPE working group. He also has an interest in the European Group. **ACTION : HSE**

B7 - Market surveillance

7.17 Ongoing. Members reminded to send any issues to J Brown. **ACTION: Members**

7.18 **'Future Safety' ATV/Forestry Helmets** – Simon updated the group. Although the current advice is to move away from forestry helmets for use in arboriculture, feedback suggests this design of helmet may not be suitable for arborists because:

- it has a filled shell which prevents proper ventilation;
- it does not have a suitable harness;
- it is difficult to get a good fit; and
- the eye visor included was poorly designed.

7.19 Simon will obtain a written report to send to Future Safety and send report to Frances (for feedback to HSL and HSE inspectors). **ACTION: S Richmond**

C1 – Promotion of rehabilitation services

7.20 Project Group not formally set up. Jason reported that it ties in with developments in Scotland through PHASS (Partnership for Health and Safety in Scotland). Members agreed that this group could communicate by e-mail rather than meeting. HSE to discuss with Bruce Hatton. **ACTION: HSE**

C2 – MSD

7.21 This group has also not formally met. Position to be clarified, but AFAG agreed this Project should remain as a priority A. Bruce Hatton to be contacted. **ACTION: F Hirst**

C3 – Noise and Vibration

7.22 **WBV** - The WBV working group met at HSL in Buxton in Jan '06 and discussed the main findings and recommendations resulting from the WBV research completed so far with HSE's lead Specialist Paul Brereton and HSL project officer Paul Pitts. It was concluded that it would be more effective to target key messages to different elements of the forestry sector.

7.23 For contractors and machinery operators it was decided to use the high incidence of back pain in this group to highlight issues relating to WBV and Group members had commented on a draft article prepared for the Forest Machinery Journal (FMJ) by Paul Brereton. This was to be forwarded to Jim Christie, a frequent contributor to the FMJ, who would turn this into an article/style suitable for the target audience.

7.24 HSE/AFAG guidance was also currently being drafted for the industry. A review of the research and preview of the guidance would be given at the AFAG seminar at the APF Show. HSL's WBV test-rig would be used on the HSE/AFAG stand at APF to demonstrate the importance of setting suspension seats correctly for individual users.

7.25 During the Buxton meeting further areas of research were identified. These should begin in the Autumn - initially on forwarders and harvesters, followed by ground-preparation machines and tractors. This work was being co-funded by HSE and FC and supported by other landowners.

7.26 **HAV** – Other than an article on hand-arm vibration produced by Paul Brereton and published in a forestry journal, nothing further is planned for forestry or arb. It was reported that Stihl have produced information for chainsaw operators.

7.27 Noise - HSL are revising their research proposal on noise exposure from mobile wood chippers. Following the submission of an acceptable research proposal a meeting would take place between HSE, HSL, the Forestry Commission and Tillhill to plan the field work, which is intended to take place in the Autumn.

C4 – Pesticides

7.28 The provisional findings of the study carried out by HSL and HSE on the potential levels of exposure of workers planting tree saplings that had been pre-treated with an alpha-cypermethrin based pesticide product had previously been discussed by AFAG. The concerns and issues raised by FC at that meeting had been discussed with Ag Sector and considered by the author. The draft report was currently being peer reviewed and would be released in the near future.

D1 – Promotion of (Arb) Best Practice

7.29 HSE's 'Engaging Arb Client' SHAD's were discussed. AFAG agreed a review of the effectiveness of these key events would be useful. **ACTION : F Hirst**

7.30 Alan reported that Bruce Hatton had some ideas to work with the media, eg through a contact he has in TV, for a 'Rogue Trader' type TV programme. However, this could not be developed further until HSE's budget position was clearer. We might have to seek external sponsorship. **ACTION : B Hatton/HSE**

7.31 Alan also suggested that the title and scope of this project should be broadened to include forestry. Members agreed and felt this Group should be established asap, perhaps communicating by e-mail, as most members would be interested. This should be discussed further with Bruce. **ACTION : HSE**

D2 – Production, Review and Maintenance of Guidance

7.32 Members agreed that a wider review of the policy, approach, effectiveness and needs of the industry should be carried out, covering not just AFAG/HSE/industry publications but use of IT/web-based information and any other methods of promoting good practice. This should be initiated before the next meeting. To be discussed with Bruce Hatton.

ACTION : HSE/B Hatton

8. HSE FORESTRY & ARBORICULTURE PROJECTS - UPDATE

8.1 **Forestry Safety and Health Awareness Days (SHADs)** - Jason reported that three SHADs targeted at Forestry Work Managers had been run in Q1 06/07 in Scotland, North East and Wales. These should have been in the previous work year but had been delayed for a variety of reasons. Feedback had been received from Scotland and YNE. Both had been fully subscribed and ~84% turned up on the day. Evaluation forms had been completed by ~60% of the attendees.

8.2 At both events all respondents considered that the objective of the SHAD had been fully met, ie *'To improve your awareness and understanding of the role and responsibilities of forest site managers and to highlight the importance of good health and safety management in preventing accidents'*. They all also thought the SHAD was a good idea and they would recommend this type of event to other businesses. 76% stated it was *'highly likely'* they would take action within their business on the issues raised at the event.

8.3 A very positive independent review of the SHADs had also been published in the FMJ. This will be copied to members. An article would also appear in a forthcoming FMJ to publicise future events and HSE/AFAG's approach to the forestry industry in general. AFAG's stand and seminar at the APF 2006 would also be publicised across the trade press.

ACTION : J Liggins

8.4 The SHADs will also be evaluated using the Bomel Barometer of Cultural Change to measure the effectiveness of these events at improving attitudes to H&S and making a positive and long lasting impact on risk management and risk taking behaviour in the forestry industry. Results will be available in the autumn.

8.5 To put the scope and potential of these events into context, Jason conservatively estimated that the managers attending the 3 events would be in control of approximately 1000 forestry sites and 2000-2500 operators between them, whereas an inspector would be able to visit only 3 or 4 sites in 1 day. Members were unanimous in their view that SHAD's were highly cost effective and beneficial - in terms of targeting and use of HSE's resources as well the industry's.

8.6 Three further forestry SHADs, specifically for contractors, machinery operators and those carrying out the role of site safety co-ordinator, are to be held later in the year. HSE are also planning three inspection campaigns between November and March to follow-up the SHADs in Wales, Scotland and the North East of England. It was hoped that by timing the inspection 'blitz' during the planting period, useful information could be collected on current planting practices, to inform AFAG's Pesticide Working Group.

8.7 **Arboriculture SHADs** - So far this year, one SHAD has taken place at Shuttleworth College, Bedfordshire. A further 2 events were scheduled in September and October and it is hoped a fourth event will be run in March 2007. AFAG agreed that a detailed review of the effectiveness of these key events would also be useful.

ACTION : F Hirst

9. FORESTRY AND ARB RELATED STANDARDS WORK

9.1 The proposed AFAG Paper 06/07 had not been prepared due to pressure of other work. Instead, Jim Dewar and Jason updated the group following their recent attendance at 2 ISO meetings held back-to-back in Finland. These dealt with manually portable and mobile self-propelled forestry machinery. The major issues/concerns highlighted were:

9.2 **Portable forestry machinery** - An ISO sub-group are carrying out a series of 'round robin' tests on noise and vibration levels to assess the variability in results from the standard test procedures for a variety of portable forestry machines. Individual machines are to be tested independently at a variety of Standard Testing Facilities across the world. This will provide data on the reproducibility of testing protocols given in the standards as well as providing information to allow for the development of procedures to reflect 'state of the art'. The results would be made available in due course. Members were also informed that discussions at the meeting had again highlighted the key role that regular and adequate maintenance of machinery played when aiming to reduce operator exposure.

9.3 **Rollover Protection (ROPS) for excavators** - A new ISO standard for ROPS on 360-degree rotating platform excavators is being developed, but this is intended for excavators used only in the construction industry. The test procedure would involve a vertical loading of only

1.3x the weight (W) of the machine. UK argued that this was below the current standard applied to purpose-built forestry machinery such as harvesters, which are tested at a vertical loading limit of 2xW. It was decided at the ISO meeting that HSE specialists would consider whether 1.3xW is sufficient to ensure adequate protection to operators in a forestry environment.

9.4 UK Representation at Standards meetings - Jim Dewar was pleased to record that Dr Gibby had given approval for Jason to attend the ISO meeting. UK was the only country to send a representative from a regulatory authority to this meeting and other ISO committee members had particularly welcomed his involvement. AFAG members agreed that HSE's presence at Standards meetings is vital to ensure a balance and to help maintain and develop sensible standards, particularly in the areas of forestry and arboriculture, where many machines are manufactured abroad and imported from all over the world, and increasingly from the Far East.

9.5 Chair pointed out that approval of a senior HSE manager has to be obtained for a member of HSE to attend any meeting not in the UK, and HSE is reviewing its involvement in Standards work. Industry members were concerned that HSE might withdraw totally and impressed upon the Chair and HSE Secretariat that it was their firm collective view that it is essential that HSE continues to take an active role in both British and International Standards meetings. They asked that this collective view be conveyed to those appropriate within HSE and DTI.

ACTION : HSE

10. ARBORICULTURE LIAISON GROUP - UPDATE

10.1 This industry group has not met recently.

11. PROGRESS OF AFAG PUBLICATIONS

11.1 The proposed 'updating' paper AFAG 06/08 had not been produced by HSE due to pressure of other work. The Chair emphasised that HSE's current budget limitations was having a significant impact on production of all publications. HSE's policy was to place guidance solely on the web-site, as far as possible. Members were particularly concerned about this, as AFAG leaflets are incorporated in many training courses and company procedures, so 'hard copies' are widely used within the industry. AFAG asked that this strong view be passed on to HSE Communications Directorate and Policy-makers. **ACTION : HSE**

11.2 Sector staff reviewed the current status and progress on revision of AFAG leaflets. Notably:

- **AFAG 404 – *Electrical utility arboriculture*** - This publication is complete other than the front cover.
- **AFAG 705 *Steep slope working in forestry*** - To be launched at the AFAG seminar at the APF and then published on HSE's website on 22nd September.
- **AIS 15 *Farm and estate forestry operations*** - HSE proposed to stop producing this leaflet as other AFAG leaflets and HSE publications cover the information within it.
- **AFAG 506 *Extraction by horse*** - Being withdrawn in its printed format because of extremely low demand for the guidance. It was hoped that the guidance could be made available in some other way, either by HSE or another organisation. This will

be discussed with the British Horse Loggers Association.

- **AFAG 203 – *Clearing saws*** - Brush cutters are now being widely used and need to be included when this leaflet is updated.
- **AFAG 401 *Tree climbing operations*** due for reprint, opportunity to update.

ACTION : J Liggins/F Hirst

12 AOB

12.1 AFAG Seminar and Stand at APF Show, Ragley Hall, Warwickshire, 21-23

September – It was agreed that Roger should introduce and chair the discussion at the Seminar and Jim Brown would introduce the session announcing the consultation exercise on Training and Certification. Neil Mackay had agreed to announce the guidance produced by the Steep Ground Working Group and would explain their findings and recommendations. Jason reiterated the previous request for volunteers to spend some time on the joint HSE/AFAG stand, along with HSE and FC staff, to speak to visitors and answer questions relating to H&S in forestry and the work of AFAG. Jason was producing a rota and offered to help prepare draft speeches, etc

ACTION : J Liggins/All Members

13 NEXT MEETING

13.1 Chair proposed to postpone the next meeting until April/May 2007, when the position regarding HSE's budget and work plans would be clearer. Date and venue to be agreed.

13.2 Simon Richmond reminded members of his suggestion that as AFAG meetings were so infrequent, it would be better to hold a longer meeting over 2 days, possibly running back-to-back with Project Groups to maximise the use of everyone's time.

13.3 Chair emphasised that HSE has to consider ways to reduce costs. For example, it may be necessary for a meeting of Project Leaders to report back, rather than a full AFAG meeting. AFAG or Project groups might also be able to meet more cost-effectively by video conference, using the facilities at all local HSE offices. However, Chair agreed to consider the cost implications of this, but meanwhile invited any member who had a particular concern or issue to share it with other members immediately, by e-mail.

ACTION : HSE

Meeting closed at 3.15.