

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

**Minutes of the 12<sup>th</sup> meeting, held at HSE, Stoneleigh Park, 19 April 2007**

**Present:**

|                |                          |
|----------------|--------------------------|
| Roger Nourish  | HSE (Chair)              |
| Alan Plom      | HSE (Sec)                |
| Jim Dewar      | FC (Technical Secretary) |
| Jim Brown      | Confor                   |
| Peter Jackson  | UAG                      |
| John Price     | LGE                      |
| John Flack     | UKFPA                    |
| Joe Bradley    | NIFS                     |
| Simon Richmond | Lantra Awards            |
| Gerald Bonner  | TCIA                     |
| Brendan Burns  | FCA                      |
| Emily Ramsey   | FC                       |
| Steve Osbourne | PCS                      |
| Frances Hirst  | HSE                      |
| Jason Liggins  | HSE                      |

**1. WELCOME AND APOLOGIES:**

Roger Nourish welcomed everyone to the meeting, particularly the new members Peter Jackson (UAG), John Price (Local Government Employers (LGE)), John Flack (UKFPA). He thanked members for their continued support for AFAG, which AIAC had acknowledged is a particularly dynamic group making a significant contribution to its objectives. He also thanked Sector staff for producing the comprehensive set of papers for the meeting. Hans Fairley (AEA), Paul Elcoat (TCIA), Bruce Hatton (AA) and Richard Beaney (TGWU) had sent their apologies. Adrian Kingsbury (NATO) had resigned from his local authority (LA). Mike Volp, a fellow Director of NATO had been invited but did not attend. Formal 'invitation' letters are to be sent to the new members by the Chair.

**ACTION: HSE**

**2. URGENT BUSINESS**

Brendan Burns drew members' attention to the Leitch Report, which proposes an approach to training and development of basic skills in the workforce, which is being considered by the Government. This suggests that employers will be responsible for paying for basic skills (numeracy, etc) training and he recommended the Report should be read by all. It is available from Lantra (Sector Skills Council), who have held a number of Regional meetings to raise awareness and obtain comments on the Report.

**ACTION: Members**

### **3. MINUTES OF THE 11<sup>TH</sup> MEETING (16/8/06)**

Minutes agreed.

### **4. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE 11<sup>TH</sup> MEETING**

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

4.2 **Minute 1.5 – Utility Rep** – Peter Jackson (UPM Tilhill) has been nominated by the UAG.

4.3 **Minute 4.5 – Guidance on Tree Inspection** – Jason Liggins confirmed that Gary Miller had spoken to the ODPM (now DCLG). ODPM had accepted that they were responsible for producing guidance on this but it was not a high priority for them. However, DCLG's Peter Annett had recently sent some general comments on the draft Sector Information Minute (SIM) intended to provide guidance to HSE and LA inspectors on acceptable practice and enforcement in relation to management of trees.

4.4 Frances Hirst informed members that the SIM had been redrafted following consultation with the industry and the document is currently being considered by Dr Gibby (Chair of AIAC) before it is sent to the HSE Board for approval.

4.5 Members asked to see a copy of the final draft. Simon Richmond said it was very important that the wording of the final document is correct from an arboricultural point of view. Too strong and it would come in for criticism, too weak and duty holders may not take sufficient care to protect members of the public. Jim Brown thought the draft was well balanced and its emphasis was about right. Alan Plom emphasised that the guidance was based on risk assessment and a sensible approach to the risks involved. Opportunities would be taken to discuss this at an IOSH 'Rural Industry Safety Group' meeting on 24 March, at the next "Future of Tree Risk" Seminar in Bristol in July and at the Arb Trade Fair and Conference.

4.6 Frances summarised the feedback from the consultation exercise:

- The draft SIM does not give sufficient information on what constitutes a robust tree management system. Such a system should meet the requirements of long standing guidance such as HSG65 and 5 Steps to Risk Assessment, particularly with regard to implementation and review.
- Further advice was needed on risk ranking (zoning), appropriate precautions and competence.
- Reference to "heritage trees" should be removed. There was an overwhelming response that this term would increase the burden on duty holders without addressing the issue of increased risk.
- As drafted, the SIM is likely to bring about a reduction in tree management standards, with a resulting rise in fatal injuries.

4.7 **AFAG Seminar and Stand at APF** – It was generally agreed that this was a very successful event and Jason was congratulated for pulling it all together, providing the speeches and briefing and securing supportive publicity through articles in the trade press. Jim Brown had launched the consultation exercise on training and certification, Neil McKay the AFAG guidance on steep ground working and HSE's Stuart McGregor gave feedback on the results of

the HSL whole body vibration (WBV) research funded jointly by FC and HSE, Jim Brown, Neil, Hans Fairley and Simon Richmond were also thanked for their help on the stand. It was agreed that AFAG needs to consider and plan involvement well in advance of the next APF event, to be held in Cannock Chase, Staffs on 18-20 September 2008.

## **5. AFAG TERMS OF REFERENCE AND WORKPLAN 2005-08**

5.1 Roger gave an update on HSE's Programmes and resources and the implications of HSE's current financial position. A significant reduction in staff across HSE was likely although the Sector had already been reduced by 20% and it was proposed to close the Stoneleigh office after the Royal Show in July.

5.2 Paper 07/01 detailed progress on AFAG's projects and programme of work. Funding and resources for projects and research continues to be based on their potential contribution to HSE's PSA targets. The onus was on all committees to deliver planned outputs and outcomes. Members remain concerned about the under-reporting of injuries and ill health not helping to justify work or to demonstrate actual impact achieved on changing behaviour and reducing accidents. Roger stressed that support from stakeholders remains crucial and he thanked all AFAG members and others from the industry who had attended the various meetings for their active input and continued support.

5.3 Members approved AFAG 07/01 for presentation to the next AIAC meeting to be held on 2 May. Jim Brown asked members to e-mail him on any issues that they would like him to raise on AFAG's behalf.

**ACTION: Members**

5.4 Members expressed concern over the evident continuing reduction in proactive inspection and enforcement in the arboricultural and forestry industries. This is leading to an increase in work being done by untrained operators, using inadequate equipment and who have no fear of being caught and prosecuted. Even clients such as LAs are using unsuitable contractors and members felt that HSE inspectors should be actively reinforcing AFAG guidance and promoting good practice. FC/FE managers were aware that HSE inspectors are not getting out to inspect forestry or arb operations any more and members were concerned at the apparent lack of inspectors' training and knowledge of good practice in the industry, leading to an inability to discern key issues in the working environment. They also felt strongly that the use of Fit3 'checklists' were not suitable for arb and forestry.

5.5 Gerald Bonner said he missed having an HSE input into the accidents that he has been involved with investigating over the past 4-5 years. Civil claims are being paid without the balancing effect of an HSE view and without necessarily improving methods of working. HSE's credibility and awareness is being affected, and the 'fear factor' is becoming non-existent. Gerald referred to an e-mail he had previously sent to Roger outlining his concerns about lack of enforcement and proactive inspections.

**ACTION: R Nourish**

5.6 Roger suggested we need to be more creative in how we reach and influence those working in the industry and referred to the 'Communications' paper later on the agenda. This proposed using new 'modern' methods of communicating.

5.7 Jim Dewar asked what effect reduced finances would have on the outputs and impact of AFAG's working groups. It was not always possible to project what their resource needs and outcomes would be at the start and if no means were available for promulgating the results then there is no point to the groups. Roger pointed out that the 'Risk Register' in the AFAG workplan had been amended to reflect this possibility, but reassured members that it was still possible to justify requests for publications or research on a case-by-case basis. Business cases have to be approved by an HSE Board member, and he was pleased to report that several bids on behalf of AFAG had been already been successful, particularly the joint-funded work with FC.

5.8 Alan Plom pointed out that new guidelines had been introduced that will require Government Departments to carry out 'Business Impact Assessments' for new guidance. Further information was awaited.

5.9 Brendan Burns and others raised concerns over the venue for future AFAG meetings as Stoneleigh was considered the most convenient location (in England). It was suggested that rooms might be available elsewhere on the site, eg at Lantra House.

## **6. REVIEW OF PROGRESS ON AFAG PROJECTS**

6.1 A brief update on each project was given by Project Leaders at the meeting. For continuity, these are recorded in number order, not necessarily as discussed.

### **A1 – Review and analysis of accident statistics**

6.2 Jason reported that Bomel had almost completed the research report. Permission to issue the report to Members and make it available to the public via HSE's website would be sought from Dr Gibby, in line with HSE's new publications policy. It was hoped that the report would be completed by the end of the summer and it was proposed that the Project Group would meet at that time. Members were keen to receive more detailed statistics and information, particularly about the significance of training in preventing accidents. It was not known if this level of detail could be extracted and further work may be necessary. An Executive Summary was requested asap.

**ACTION: HSE**

### **A2 – Training and Certification**

6.3 Simon Richmond introduced and summarised AFAG paper 07/02 – "A2: Training and Certification – Industry consultation" as follows:

- Comments and input had been received from a wide range of consultees;
- Most of these had been received via the new web-based forum;
- Most respondees were involved in training;
- There was some criticism of existing arrangements for training and certification;
- Analysis of the replies was not easy because they were not specifically related to the options that had been offered. However, there were a number of common threads;
  - Compulsory re-certification after 5 years was unpopular;
  - There was not much support for a web-based system;
  - Some type of logging of experience/CPD was thought to be useful, and
  - Any increase in cost should be avoided.

6.4 There had not been a unanimous agreement at the Project working group meeting on 4 April on what was needed but it was agreed to look further at current methods for logging of experience/CPD used in some companies and other industries and how this could be implemented and recorded in a format to suit the industry. However, it was likely that separate systems for forestry and arboriculture would be required and a number of different scenarios need to be drawn up. Whatever system is identified or developed will need to be tested within the industry. Better ways of reaching operators/contractors and getting them to comment/contribute need to be found. Alan Plom referred to new (HSE internal) guidance on carrying out e-consultation exercises. Also, any findings/ recommendations need to be fed into the review of the NPTC chainsaw units, which is due to be completed by April 2008.

**ACTION: HSE**

6.5 Jim Brown reinforced this and said that NPTC need to satisfy AFAG over any changes and also on the issue of independent assessment following training. CPD and operator logs are very different. Brendan commented that it was essential that AFAG was clear what it was trying to achieve, i.e. is it to tighten up on businesses, or individuals. The consultation paper did not reflect what we are trying to achieve through CPD and it must be seen to be of benefit to the “man on the ground”. Arb and forestry are likely to have different needs and these will have to be identified, eg different requirements for the cycle of ‘updating’ skills/CoC’s. Significantly, forestry contractors feel that they are already well regulated through method statements and monitoring. They do not consider that their job has changed sufficiently to suggest CPD is necessary or relevant to them. It was agreed that more research is needed and to compare what is done in other Sectors (eg construction).

**ACTION: S Richmond/HSE**

6.6 Simon reminded the meeting that the main aim was to reduce accidents and ill health. Any scheme should be aimed at individuals to improve their health and safety standards, as well as enabling employers to recognise what individuals have achieved over and above their CoCs. A unified structure is needed to enable employers to recognise the experience and ‘value’ of workers, across sectors – and in a language understood by employers in different sectors, where treework or work with related equipment may be a peripheral activity. It was also important that no single organisation was seen to drive the consultation - this should be seen as coming from AFAG.

6.7 Peter Jackson expressed disappointment at the findings and feedback arguing that the utility arb sector already relied widely on CPD to build on the entry-level qualifications and to enable employers to ensure individuals are competent. CoC’s alone cannot guarantee this. John Flack agreed, adding that employers do look at additional information such as CVs and references for forestry machine operators (FMOs).

6.8 Roger concluded that we do not have a consensus yet but it was clear that the industry does want us to continue to pursue this. A summary of where we are and what we propose to do was needed for AIAC. There may well be different needs for arb and forestry and there may be different needs within each industry. At the moment we don’t have all the information that we need and further consultation is needed. We must communicate directly with people working in the industry and we should also be looking in more detail at existing schemes, such as the food industry’s ‘Passport Scheme’. The Sector’s Food Section could either give a presentation or provide a paper on this for the next AFAG/T&C meeting.

**ACTION: HSE**

6.9 Jim Dewar raised the issue of European ‘Certificates of Recognition’ which had been discussed that week at NFE. This was intended to list individual’s skills and experience, The aim of the scheme is for employees to have a way of presenting their skills and expertise to employers - wherever they are. However, this was likely to fall short of demonstrating the level of training/CoC achieved and this would need to be clarified for certain activities. A mapping exercise was required, but this would also require funding. However, the timing was useful and we need to look at the implications of this to see what impact it will have on CPD, the NPTC review of CoCs and what AFAG is proposing.

6.10 John Flack said that the FMOCs established the *level of safety* to be achieved, and operators would be perturbed if a Register of Competence was required. Simon suggested that although the NFE ideas are strongly related to the AFAG consultation they are not crucial to it and the UK will need to develop its own system. Brendan Burns added that the NFE won’t be recommending anything as stringent as we have and we will need to include additional questions. We cannot wait for NFE – Industry support and research is needed and FC need to establish what they want, or if they are content with the existing arrangements Emily Ramsay said it was important to manage Forest Works Managers’ expectations. CPD is a spectrum – individuals with entry level qualifications are not necessarily efficient or safe and a structured evidence-based approach is most suitable for forestry.

**ACTION: J Dewar to circ paper to T&C Group members**

6.11 Alan Plom reminded the Group of the ‘CHAS’ scheme - which provides a list of contractors considered competent and suitable for LAs to employ, across a range of activities. The CHAS administrator (John Murphy) has spoken to the Arb Association with a view to automatically including ‘AA Approved contractors’ in the CHAS list. Members felt this needs to be monitored and supervised, whilst being user-friendly. However, the tighter the Quality Assurance, the more costly the scheme.

**ACTION: A Plom to arrange presentation by J Murphy (CHAS) to T&C Group**

6.12 Members then discussed what further work was needed and Simon summarised the key points as follows:

- Feedback needs to be sent to NPTC asap, but NPTC are unlikely to be proposing any dramatic changes. There still needs to be an entry level qualification;
- Arb and forestry sectors need to be looked at separately;
- We need to balance what we understand what type of CPD is needed in different sectors. There is resistance to a straight forward CPD system.
- We must be able to identify and engage with those in the industry who will use the system;
- There must be alternative ways of showing the level that has been reached. Any system introduced must be flexible;
- Whatever is produced must map against the Lantra (Sector Skills Council) National Occupational Standards and On-line Competencies Framework Scheme.

## **B1- Steep Ground Working**

6.13 The Steep Ground Working Project had been completed successfully, with considerable and effective input from industry, under Neil MacKay. The planned guidance (AFAG 705) had been launched and had received a very favourable response from the forestry industry.

## **B2 - Management of Working at Heights**

6.14 Frances reported that this was being developed through the AA's MEWP Working Group. The Group met on 13 March 2007 and was due to meet again on 15 May to discuss the final draft. This is due to be out for final consultation at the end of July 2007.

## **B3 – Welfare Provisions**

6.15 This project group had been merged with Project C.4 *Reduce exposure to pesticides*, particularly in relation to tree planting.

## **B4 – Rigging and Dismantling Techniques**

6.16 Frances reported that the second and third quarterly reports had been received. The final draft is due at the end of June and the report should be published at the end of July. The researchers had asked whether they could discuss some of the preliminary findings at the Arb Trade Fair at the end of June and at an international conference in Honolulu in July. Elizabeth Gibby's approval is being sought for this.

**ACTION: F Hirst**

## **B5 – Machine-Assisted Take-Down**

6.17 FC had carried out some initial research last year following a series of accidents involving use of inappropriate machinery/techniques, eg to assist motor-manual felling of edge trees. A proposal for Phase II of the research project had been submitted and the possibility of joint funding of the research (HSE and FC) was being investigated.

## **B6 - Chainsaw PPE**

6.18 **Chainsaw Trousers** –Gerald Bonner explained that as a result in changes in trouser technology several suppliers were now making available lightweight trousers with chainsaw protection in the front and up to below knee level at the back. These give more protection than Type A trousers but do not give the full thigh protection provided by Type C, which is the standard specified in AFAG guidance. Paul Elcoat and Bruce Hatton had previously raised concerns about the confusion in the industry as some NPTC assessors are accepting the higher lever Type A trousers being worn by candidates for aerial tree work tests, but others are not. HSE Inspectors are also still requiring Type C trousers for aerial tree work, and HSE is being openly criticised on industry websites.

6.19 AFAG and HSE advice is now running behind these changes in the industry as many arborists are now choosing the higher standard of Type A trousers in preference to Type C because they reduce fatigue and heat stress, which create their own hazards.. This is based on a risk-assessed approach. Gerald was unaware of any 'rear of leg' injuries being reported in the past 10 years due to inadequate ppe/protection – this equates to approx 8 million chain saw hours. Members agreed that this issue should be taken forward by the Working Group, with the possibility of asking HSL to look at the heat stress issues associated with Type C trousers as compared to the higher level type A.

**ACTION: J. Brown/HSE**

6.20 **Chain Saw Boots** – Frances referred to an enquiry/complaint about boots with composite-toe caps which evidently provided inadequate protection from chain saw blades. This material had been accepted for the EN standard strength test, but did not appear to provide adequate protection from cut-through. The complainant had been asked to refer this issue to the local Trading Standards Department in the relevant area, as they have the responsibility for enforcement of the PPE Supply Regs, not HSE.

6.21 – Members were reminded that Jim Brown had agreed to take over this Group from Simon Richmond.

### **B7 - Market surveillance**

6.22 Ongoing. In addition to the above issues in relation to chain saw ppe, Members were reminded to send any other issues to Jim Brown.

**ACTION: Members**

6.23 **‘Future Safety’ ATV/Forestry Helmets** – Simon still to obtain a written report to send to Future Safety and cc to Frances (for feedback to HSL and HSE inspectors).

**ACTION: S Richmond**

### **C1 – Promotion of rehabilitation services**

6.24 This project had been given the formal support of the Partnership for Health and Safety in Scotland (PHASS). This would facilitate and promote the opportunities to work in partnership with OGDs, such as the NHS, in delivering the project aims. The Group will be convened during 2007-08 but is likely to continue into the new work year.

### **C2 – MSD**

6.25 This topic remains priority A but the Group has still to be convened, due to lack of industry chair. A video footage of hand planting is to be reviewed by HSE’s ergonomist

**ACTION: F Hirst**

### **C3 – Noise and Vibration**

6.26 **Whole Body Vibration** - The second phase of HSL’s research was due to be completed in May. When received the group will re-convene. A business case for AFAG guidance based on both sets of research would be submitted.

6.27 **Hand Arm Vibration** - Work is currently underway by FC (in collaboration with HSE Specialists and Sector) to develop good practice guidance for managing risks for HAVs in forestry. When this work is finished it is planned to roll the guidance out to the tree work industry. FC have also agreed to fund further research on trigger times for a range of forestry and arboriculture equipment that will be of use across a range of other industries. This initiative was supported and encouraged by HSE’s Noise and Vibration Specialist ‘Pool’. A number of articles on the risks associated with hand-held forest machinery have been written by Jason and Specialist colleagues and published over recent months in the trade press

6.28 **Noise** - Jason informed members that he was still awaiting the HSL research report on Noise Exposure From Mobile Woodchippers. Jason thanked FC and TillHill for their efforts and support during the fieldwork and acknowledged the resource contributed by both organisations. Jason also informed members that a number of articles had also been published in the trade press on controlling noise exposure in tree work.

#### **C4 – Pesticides**

6.29 Information was being collected from HSE Inspectors who had been visiting planting sites during the forestry blitz. Initial reports suggested that some incidence of skin effects and ill-health had been reported by workers following handling pesticide treated saplings. This information was being analysed and the project group aimed to meet in Q2/3 2007.

#### **D1 – Promotion of Forestry and Arboricultural Good Practice**

6.30 This built on Bruce Hatton's previous paper proposing to disseminate information through insurers/underwriters and the media/TV (eg producing a 'Rogue Traders type programme). In Bruce's absence, Alan Plom introduced the discussion paper produced on behalf of the 'Communications Project Group': AFAG 07/03 - D1: AFAG Communications – Strategic Review. This proposed a communications 'strategy' (fitting within HSE's overarching priorities and approach), based on continuing to promote and raise awareness of current guidance, promotion through the specialist press and national media developing the existing website. The paper highlighted options and proposals for the future use of new technology (eg website-based videos/'podcasts', etc). These potential developments and the action points in the paper were discussed and generally supported by members.

6.31 One key issue still strongly endorsed by the Group was that AFAG leaflets remain the preferred means of getting information out to the industry. It was also pointed out that Lantra Awards rely on and pay for 100k leaflets/year, for issue and use on statutory and other training courses. However, they are difficult to use electronically because in their current 'tri-fold' format they are difficult to 'navigate' around on-screen and they need to be produced in 'print-friendly' form. Other issues surrounding web-based documents which need to be resolved include the use of colour. This increases business' printing costs, black and white copies are not always legible and key information may be lost. This could be overcome by suitable design and use of shading/hatching rather than multiple colours, etc.

**ACTION: HSE to consider**

6.32 Jim Dewar observed that the most appropriate means of disseminating project outcomes must be discussed at the outset by each Group, although this may change during the course of the work, eg it may involve the use of the website and other means. HSE may not be able to fund all the products (i.e. leaflets), so the industry may need to be involved in issuing or sponsoring these. The UAG might be prepared to guarantee supply of safety critical leaflets in their area.

6.33 **Action point 1 – Insurance Initiative** - Members agreed that insurance brokers would be an effective route for disseminating information. AFAG needs to identify the relevant people. In his AIAC paper on HSE's insurance initiative Roger had originally signaled his intention to hold a seminar for the Agricultural insurance industry as a whole, hopefully mediated/jointly organised with the ABI. He had since approached ABI. Unfortunately whilst they were broadly supportive of the project's aims, ABI said they felt ill-equipped in terms of

their committee infrastructure and unable to facilitate such a meeting. They also felt unable to be associated with anything that might potentially introduce more competition into what was currently de facto a monopoly position (occupied by NFU Mutual) and because of acute competitiveness in this area felt it was unlikely that the various players in the insurance industry would be willing to meet together under one roof. Instead they encouraged HSE to go down the route of a series of bi-laterals arranged directly between HSE and individual insurers/underwriters, an option which albeit more time-consuming, is now being pursued.

6.34 One way forward is to persuade the insurance industry that sponsoring leaflets is to their advantage. This could be done, for example by their paying for reprints themselves as any money received for this is not credited to HSE. There are a number of ways in which this could be organised, for example each company could produce copies with its own logo or contribute to a reprint in conjunction with others. This may involve logo copyright issues but HSE is less strict on this than it used to be.

**ACTION: HSE**

6.35 Drawing upon HSE's risk-assessment software and other statistical accident and economic data, Roger and other members of the Sector team were now actively developing a risk-assessed underwriting package in partnership with Checkmate International (CMi) and this was well advanced. The system was being designed to allow underwriters to offer insurance policies and premia that were much more directly related to the actual degree of risk / controls / competence in place at individual agricultural undertakings, thus providing real incentives for improved health & safety performance. On completion of the package the next step would be to encourage uptake by Insurance companies, a matter which would be pursued at HSE's series of planned bilateral meetings.

6.36 Roger is still pursuing the development of a risk assessment underwriting model with CMI. This could be produced on a CD along with relevant leaflets and the whole package sponsored.

6.37 **Action point 2 – ‘Arb and Forestry Essentials’ Booklet-** The original suggestion of producing a comprehensive guidance booklet for the industry along the lines of *Farmwise* was discussed. However, AFAG leaflets are currently widely used by managers and employees and it was felt an all-embracing document like this would be too detailed. It would also be more difficult and costly to update. The preferred option was to remain with individual/activity-specific AFAG leaflets.

6.38 **Action point 3 – Sponsorship** – It was suggested that new methods/initiatives such as a CDrom containing all relevant leaflets could be sponsored. Brendan reported that the FCA already produces a CD with all the AFAG leaflets on. This had been sponsored by the EU as training initiative. He would see if this could be shared with non-members.

**ACTION: B Burns**

6.39 **Action points 4&5 – International use/Translation of AFAG leaflets -** Several other countries either want to use or already do use AFAG leaflets. This bolsters the status of AFAG guidance and means that the countries involved are working to similar standards. One Australian State has asked to jointly sponsor revisions and production of new leaflets relevant to them, but the finances involved to permit this are very complicated.

**ACTION: HSE to advise enquirer**

6.40 Jim Dewar pointed out that rather than working with individual countries it would be worth liaising with the ILO as their guidance is in need of updating. Brendan added that the ISA are forming an international health and safety committee to provide standardised information on tree work, including training and certification. It would be extremely useful to have the AFAG leaflets included in this.

6.41 Jason reported that the RDI have already translated some of the AFAG leaflets into Polish. These are text-only at the moment but agreement had been secured that HSE's Communications Directorate would have them properly formatted, including diagrams. The translations are currently being checked, the leaflets will then be put on HSE's migrant workers web site. Members advised that it was important for AFAG and HSE to have a consistent approach on translation issues. This is a cross sector issue and needs a policy decision at high level.

**ACTION: HSE**

6.42 **Action point 6 – HSE Safety and Awareness Days (SHADs)** - 3 SHADs for Forest Works Managers (FWM) were held last year. One of these was being independently evaluated. A report summary will be sent to members. Recommendations for this year's SHADs are that FWMs and contractors should attend these events together. A blitz focussing on pre-treated saplings is also being carried out. The findings will also feed into AFAG working group C4 on pesticides. The HSE Specialist Inspector's report on this issue has almost been finalised.

**ACTIONS: J Liggins**

6.43 4 'Engaging arboricultural clients' SHADs were held last year and a further 4 are planned for this year. Some formal evaluation of these events is still required.

**ACTION: HSE**

6.44 **Action point 7 – Articles/Use of Media** – Articles should be 'on- message' – Members should liaise with the relevant member for the Sector for up to date information/coordination. Frances announced that 'ArbNews' is being re-named 'Treework News' to reflect its wider interest and target audience. She was asked to ensure all AFAG members are on the mailing list.

**ACTION: F Hirst**

6.45 **Action point 8 – Improving Delivery/Use of Websites** - Jason informed members that the 'Forestry' web site is being improved and will also be renamed "Treework", with improved signposting to other relevant pages, guidance, research reports, etc.

6.46 **Action point 9 – AFAG Community Website/Discussion Forum** – This had been set up to accommodate the consultation on training and certification. Jim Dewar pointed out that if web-based discussion forums are used to collect information these will only work if contributors are made aware of issues, they reply quickly and they in turn receive a speedy response. Members were advised that hyperlinks should only be made from other organisation's websites to the AFAG/HSE website, rather than vice versa, to avoid multiple editing.

**ACTION: J Liggins to circulate summary of structure of new website.**

6.47 **Action point 10 – New ways of Delivery/Use of IT** - It is hoped that it will be possible to include 'hazard alerts' on the website, along the lines of the 'Worksafe' articles produced in

British Columbia, or animated slide shows based on investigation of actual accidents. Jim Brown recalled that AFAG have also issued good graphics/drawings of accidents in the past. Jason is also exploring the use of video-streaming/'podcasts', which can be downloaded on mobile phones, etc and used to inform managers, trainers and operators of new issues, guidance on methods of work etc. Jim Dewar reported that FC were already recording material that could be used for this purpose and FC would be willing to cooperate in any trials.

6.48 **Evaluation** – There was some scepticism that such modern techniques will penetrate this industry, but all members were willing to 'give it a go'. Research would be needed to evaluate the impact of any new techniques.

**ACTION: HSE**

## **D2 – Production, Review and Maintenance of Guidance**

6.49 Again in Bruce's absence, Alan introduced AFAG 07/04 - D2: Production and maintenance of guidance – Review, produced by the Communications Project Group. Members were asked to provide any additional information they had on other guidance, web sites or useful links not included in the draft. Any comments on the paper should be sent to Alan asap.

**ACTION: Members**

6.50 Jason Liggins reported that AFAG 804 has had to be reprinted without the proposed changes, but these will be incorporated in the next print run. There was also some discussion ongoing re the guidance on overhead power lines in leaflets G55/1 and GS6, between the industry, the Energy Network Association (ENA) and within HSE.

6.51 Frances Hirst asked members whether they thought it appropriate to include guidance on aerial rescue in the proposed revision of AFAG 401 *Tree climbing operations*. This was supported.

**ACTION: HSE**

## **7. ARBORICULTURE LIAISON GROUP – UPDATE**

7.1 Simon Richmond reported that the ALG had not met since the last meeting and there had been some difficulty organising a chair.

## **8. REVIEW OF STANDARDS WORK**

8.1 A review of the Standards Work carried out by Sector and FC was presented to Members. Paper AFAG/07/05 summarised the wide range of topics and extent of work going on. The Agricultural Engineers Association (AEA) now acted as Secretariat for the BSI committees and Hans Fairley now chairs AGE 29: Forestry Machinery, as Jim Dewar had had to stand down due to pressure of work. Members noted that the industry was generally represented by FC and HSE at national and key international meetings, and that this imposed a considerable demand on their resources, particularly for overseas (ISO/CEN) meetings where much of the critical discussions took place. Attendance therefore had to be prioritised, eg on issues such as ROPS for excavators used on steep ground, where it was essential to counter and balance the views of up to 15 international manufacturers for whom the use of their machines in this environment is not significant.

8.2 Members recognised and thanked Jim Dewar for his exceptional service over the years and the HSE and FC for their continued input, particularly in view of the importance of standards work in ensuring machinery was supplied safe at source, and to ensure that any information provided was robust and could be used to inform purchasing policies and risk assessments.

## **9. REVIEW OF RESEARCH**

9.1 AFAG/07/06 presented an updated review of HSE and FC sponsored research projects. Information on specific research projects being carried out in support of the AFAG workplan was given during the update on each project. Members were asked to inform Alan of any additional work carried out by other organisations which should be recorded. Also to suggest any new topics which should be considered.

**ACTION: Members**

## **10. ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

**10.1 Chain Saw Trousers** – Gerald Bonner had not been able to produce the listed paper, but this was discussed under the relevant project (B6).

## **11. DATE AND VENUE OF NEXT MEETING**

In view of the closure of the Stoneleigh office, it was agreed that the next meeting would be held at Forestry Commission HQ, Edinburgh preferably during the last 2 weeks of September. It was also agreed that in view of the interval between meetings and the large amount of work to get through, the meeting should be over two days. This would also allow more time for fruitful discussion between members and for Project Groups to convene in the margins of the meeting. Jim Dewar is to confirm room availability and members will be informed, ASAP.

**ACTION: J Dewar/HSE**

Meeting closed at 16.00