



**ARBORICULTURE AND FORESTRY ADVISORY GROUP (AFAG)
NOTES of 16th MEETING**

Date	21 May 2009	Location	City and Guilds NPTC, Stoneleigh	Taken by	Frances Hirst Simon Parry
	Present				
	HSE	AFAG Members			
	Graeme Walker (Chair) Alan Plom (Secretary) Frances Hirst Simon Parry Nick Sangha (Item 10 only)	Jim Dewar (FC) (Technical Secretary) James Brown (Confor) Ros Burnley (Lantra SSC) Des Campbell (DARDNI) Hans Fairley (AEA) Bruce Hamilton (PCS/IAgrE) Steve Hewitt (City&Guilds NPTC) Pete Jackson (UAG) Martin Lennon (NPTC Assessor)	Donald Maclean (FCA) Imogen Mole (NATO) Graham Munford (IOSH) Alex Murray (UKFPA) David Owen(Lantra Awards) John Price (LGE) Emily Ramsay (FC) Simon Richmond (AA) Alex Laver (ISA)		
Item	Key Points and Actions				
1	Welcome & Opening Remarks				
	<p>1.1 Graeme Walker, the new Head of HSE's Agriculture & Food Sector welcomed members to the 16th AFAG meeting (also his first as chair) and thanked City and Guilds NPTC, for hosting the meeting. Three new members were introduced: Graham Mumford (IOSH), Martin Lennon (trainer/NPTC Assessor) and Bruce Hamilton (PCS - replacing Steve Osborne, who has retired from AFAG). Bruce is also able to represent the Institution of Agricultural Engineers as he is Sec of IAgrE's Forestry Engineering Group.</p>				
2	Urgent Business [ie Matters arising at recent meetings, etc, to inform discussion.]				
	<p>2.1. Ros Burnley and James Brown reported on the Lantra SSC Trees & Timber Industry Group meeting held on 12/5/09 in Edinburgh. They were confident that the Group would be able to progress its work and were devising an Action Plan. Key issues for the industry are recruitment and provision of training opportunities for new entrants, including 14-19 year olds and the new Apprenticeship Framework.</p> <p>2.2. Pete Jackson highlighted issues discussed by the Utilities Arboriculture Group (UAG). Its members are to compare their safety performance using Total Recorded Incidence Rates (TRI); training/certification (changes needed to NOS and CoC's for the revised G55), and UAG's first Annual Conference being held on 6-7 July.</p>				
3	Date & Venue for next (17th) AFAG meeting				
	<p>3.1 Agreed to be held at Forestry Commission HQ, Edinburgh on Tuesday 1st December 2009.</p>				

4	<p>Minutes of 15th Meeting</p> <p>4.1 Members agreed that shorter minutes would be acceptable but asked for the additional 'AFAG Newsletter' to still be produced as it summarises the key issues discussed at the meeting and highlights actions for the industry. It is passed on to members by organisations in this format or extracts are used in newsletters/e-bulletins, etc. It is also sent to all recipients of HSE's Treework e-bulletin.</p> <p>4.2 The full minutes were agreed as a true record subject to clarifying who volunteered to chair Project Group B8 Treework & Overhead Power Lines.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">ACTION: Simon Parry</p>
5	<p>Matters arising <i>[Not covered in the Action Notes, or elsewhere on agenda.]</i></p> <p>5.1 Min 4.1 Insurance initiative - No further progress but this is about to be re energised through discussions with the insurance industry.</p> <p>5.2 Min 4.3 AFAG community web site - All members reminded to check that they have joined the site as this is being encouraged for communications/discussions between members.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">ACTION: Frances Hirst</p> <p>5.3 Min 4.4 Lantra Trees & Timber Group - Letter expressing AFAG members' concerns about the industry's lack of understanding and involvement in NOS and Sector Approved Profiles (SAPs) sent to Lantra. Matter discharged <i>[Min 2.1 above refers.]</i></p> <p>5.4 Min 5.2 Accident Analysis - Internal HSE issues relating to the Bomel report have delayed it appearing on the web site. AFAG agreed that the sentences relating to the challenged incidence rates are to be withdrawn from the Executive Summary before publication. It will also be emphasised this research was based on a limited (high incident) period.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">ACTION: HSE</p> <p>5.5 Min 5.3 The associated Bomel analysis of Occupational Ill Health is also to be placed on the web site asap.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">ACTION: HSE</p>
6	<p>AFAG Terms of Reference & Workplan 2009-10 & Beyond</p> <p>6.1 Alan Plom outlined the updates in the terms of reference and work plan in AFAG 09/01, including Annex 1. Members were asked to send any comments (on para 13) to Alan by end of May. The final version of the paper will be put on HSE's web site asap.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">ACTION: Members/HSE</p> <p>6.2 Graeme Walker updated members on the progress with HSE's "Agriculture Revisited" initiative. Although this currently focussed on reducing fatalities in agriculture, there is an unreserved recognition of the work of AFAG and he assured Members that this area will continue to be resourced by HSE.</p> <p>6.3 Pete Jackson was concerned that the Workplan does not indicate how progress will be measured, ie to demonstrate how H&S management will be improved in the tree work industry. He advocated use of performance targets.</p> <p>6.4 Hans Fairley suggested that AFAG should be looking at the culture of the industry. The high risks prevalent in the industry interact differently depending on individual outlook and personality. Some are in it because they enjoy the risk, eg climbers. There needs to be a change in the culture of the operative, moving from unwise risk taking to 'considered' risk taking.</p>

	<p>6.5 Martin Lennon asked what the strategy of each project group was for communicating their outcomes. Alan explained that this should be an integral part of each Project Plan and Project Leaders were asked to cover how the messages/recommendations are to be communicated to the industry in the detailed Plans in Annex 2. <i>[Secs Note: Annex 2 was not circulated for this meeting but it will be updated with the full Workplan and made available on the AFAG website. Project leaders are asked to send any further comments to Alan Plom, asap.]</i></p> <p style="text-align: right;">ACTION: Project Leaders/HSE</p>
7	<p>Review of AFAG projects</p> <p>A1 Cultural change and causes of accidents related to risk reduction.</p> <p>7.1 Agreed Project A1 can be stood down. Emily Ramsay highlighted the strong links from the Bomel report to Projects A2 & A3. The cultural issues in the industry would be considered by Project A3 but the suggested apprenticeship schemes are more relevant to A2 (Training). These two groups will need to interact though as links to training and methods of communicating will lead to a better understanding of the culture of operatives and the way in which they behave. Training is strongly related to cultural change and the approach to large employers involves a very different approach to micro industries in tree work. Imogen Mole commented that the Local Authorities are the big employers of these micro industries.</p> <p>A2(A) Training & Certification.</p> <p>7.2 Simon Richmond reminded members that the proposed Register of Tree Work Operatives (RTwo) did not have universal approval and as an alternative, the generic guidance was to be reviewed. AFAG 805 outlined the basic principles but another section was needed to show how progression within the industry could be demonstrated through recording 'continuing professional development' (CPD). Following discussion there was a general consensus that there was still potential for a voluntary 'Register' to benefit businesses in the industry although there are significant concerns about how it would be managed' and the need to avoid unnecessary bureaucracy, cost, time, etc, particularly on small (micro) businesses.</p> <p>7.3 Apprenticeship schemes currently being developed will be delivered with Lantra support (through the Trees & Timber Group) but the CPD scheme is a separate issue and care was needed about how points were awarded. There was perhaps more common ground than differences and agreement was reached that the project should remain ongoing and build upon the agreed principles. The Arboriculture Forum was supportive and could be used to identify the benefits and progress the deliverables whilst the proposed Forestry Forum needed to meet to agree what is feasible and what is not, as differences still remained between the two industries.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Action: James Brown</p> <p>7.4 The small working group proposed to devise a questionnaire for employers summarising appropriate training/competence/experience has not yet been formed due to other conflicting pressures of work, but Simon will convene this soon. <i>[Secs Note – Arranged at HSE Northampton 3/7/09.]</i></p> <p style="text-align: right;">ACTION: Simon Richmond</p> <p>A2(B) Mapping European Training Standards initiative.</p> <p>7.5 Steve Hewitt & James Brown reported on progress at the various meetings they have attended on behalf of the industry and AFAG. There had been a pleasing change in attitude in some countries and a further meeting was to be held on 16/6/09 in Germany where the first assessment would take place. The EU does not have accurate statistics for GB's treework companies. Lantra are carrying out research on all industries in the landbased sector and may be able to provide details.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">ACTION: Steve Hewitt /Ros Burnley</p> <p>7.6 European "Leonardo" funding was available for this initiative. Auditing will be required to maintain the integrity of the scheme as concerns have been expressed about this being seen as a money making</p>

	<p>venture and a governing Council was being set up to administer it. AFAG agreed it is vital the UK is involved and we must influence its development by direct support and attendance. NPTC had supported Steve and James Brown had been co-sponsored so far by Confor, Lantra, HSE (and James!). Further financial support will be needed to attend future meetings.</p> <p>7.7 The UK standard for chainsaw use is generally higher than other European states and we must seek to retain our standard. Auditing must take place against the UK standard as this is the minimum benchmark that an operator must possess. At the moment, the initiative is only voluntary but perhaps an EU directive will be required. Tension is caused by the obligatory freedom of movement across Europe with the differing standards of training and evidence of competence. ACTION: Steve Hewitt /James Brown</p> <p>A3 Reduce accidents involving chain saws.</p> <p>7.8 This can be linked into the FC's own review of chainsaw work, but a decision is needed on the scope of the project. Emily to contact volunteers (Gerald Bonner, Pete Jackson, Ros Burnley, Hans Fairley, Robert Beaney and Sector staff) to agree outcomes, communication strategy and end date. ACTION: Emily Ramsay</p> <p>B1 Identifying and promulgating precautions for machines working on steep slopes.</p> <p>7.9 Project complete but advice is required for skylines as they are increasingly being used. HSE/Sector has no expertise in this specialist operation and it was agreed that a new project group (B9) was needed to progress this. Donald Maclean offered to do this initial work. Jim Dewar has the old FC skyline guidance available electronically if required. ACTION: Donald Maclean</p> <p>B2 Improving management of work at height, including implementation of the Work at Height Regulations.</p> <p>7.10 The affect of the NOS and NPTC review of chainsaw CoCs is to be assessed.</p> <p>7.11 Work on AFAG 401 complete but more publicity is required to highlight the changes. The AA's Guide to Good Climbing Practice is to be revised and this is to be linked to the drafting of a Guide to Good Rigging Practice.</p> <p>7.12 A request had been received (from David Robinson) for AFAG to consider publishing guidance on the use of cranes in arboriculture. He has submitted an article to the AA newsletter asking for further information. The issue is also being discussed at the next ISA conference. Simon Richmond and Alex Laver to report back at next meeting, with a view to proposing a new Project Group. ACTION: Alex Laver/Simon Richmond</p> <p>B3 Examination of feasibility of welfare provision on forestry work sites.</p> <p>7.13 Members agreed that this project has a low priority and can be linked to the pesticides project C4. Emily Ramsay is to convene the Working Group. ACTION: Emily Ramsay</p> <p>B4 Rigging and dismantling techniques in arboriculture.</p> <p>7.14 Research report now available from HSE's web site. The project group met in January to discuss the best way of disseminating the information to the industry and HSE are seeking funding for the researchers to produce a series of articles for the trade press/treework website. This depends on the Sector's Communications Budget for 09/10, which has still to be confirmed. ACTION: Frances Hirst</p> <p>7.15 The AA's Media and Communications Committee are convening a project group (chaired by John</p>
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	<p>Price) to revise the Guide to Good Climbing Practice and to draft a Guide to Good Rigging Practice. Due to be completed in 2009/10. Members advised that an AFAG leaflet on rigging will still be needed to convey and encourage uptake of the recommendations. This can be drafted at the same time. ACTION: John Price</p> <p>7.16 Industry workshop(s) will then be used to launch the guidance in 2010/11. Bruce Hamilton suggested IAgrE could help to organise these events. ACTION: Bruce Hamilton</p> <p>B5 Machine-assisted takedown of trees.</p> <p>7.17 Graeme Hodgson's report on his research is complete but needs editing for publishing on HSE's website. This is in hand.</p> <p>7.18 AFAG leaflets 310 Use of Winches in Directional Felling and Takedown and 603 Mechanical Harvesting will be revised by the working group and then put out for wider consultation within their organisations. ACTION: Simon Parry</p> <p>B6 Chainsaw PPE – to improve and promote standards and related issues.</p> <p>7.19 Simon Bowes (Euroforest) has asked HSE to clarify the use of gloves for chainsaw work and he is to send further information. This will be progressed on receipt of this. ACTION: Sector/Members</p> <p>B7 Market surveillance (product design).</p> <p>7.20 The point in AFAG 09/02 on 360° excavators is incorrect - Simon Parry and Jim Dewar to reword. ACTION: Simon Parry/Jim Dewar</p> <p>B8 Treework near Overhead Power Lines</p> <p>7.21 Project ongoing, waiting for Scottish and Southern Energy to identify the second site. Members discussed the scope of this project and agreed that there should be two elements - one relating specifically to mechanical harvesting and the other to general treework near OHPLs. The guidance for arborists in AFAG 804 Electricity at Work: Forestry and Arboriculture needs strengthening and revising in relation to ENA's G55. This will be addressed during the current revision. ACTION: Project Group</p> <p>C1 Promotion of Occupational Health Services</p> <p>7.22 Project deferred due to lack of resource within HSE and Members agreed to park this project for the time being, until Jason Liggins' return in July 2009. Alan explained that Jason will be returning to pick up some of the forestry-related work and Simon Parry would continue with his current projects.</p> <p>C2 Identifying the prevalence and causes of musculoskeletal disorders and develop strategies for risk reduction.</p> <p>7.23 This is a huge topic which potentially requires further research to take it forward. It is important that it is referred to on the new Treework website. Alex Laver is to report back on the 'Biomechanics' paper being delivered at the ISA conference and Pete Jackson is to send the useful information from the cost/benefit analysis of UPM Tilhill's physiotherapy programme. ACTION: Alex Laver/Pete Jackson</p> <p>C3 Reduce operator exposure to hand-arm vibration, whole body vibration and noise.</p> <p>7.24 HSE's Agriculture Information Sheet (AIS) on WBV has still to be finalised. Stuart Macgregor worked with the FC to produce their internal guidance for managers and employees but a link has still to be made with the FC's guidance. This will need to be adapted for external use. Alan Plom will raise AFAG's concerns at the HSE N&V Specialists conference he is attending in June 2009. ACTION: Alan Plom</p>
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7.25 Emily explained that the FC has a check list for managers/operators but advice is still needed for individuals. This advice could be summarised and put on the HSE's Treework website.

ACTION: Emily Ramsay/ HSE

C4 Reduce exposure to pesticides, e.g. during tree planting.

7.26 This work needs re-prioritising to Priority A following the review by the ACP and AFAG 102 (and 202?) need to be revised.. Project group members Emily Ramsay, Simon Parry and Robert Beaney, but Emily intends to delegate this work to a colleague. Pete Jackson to ask Tim Lidden UPM Tillhill to join Group.

ACTION: Emily Ramsay/Pete Jackson/HSE

D1 Promotion of best practice in arboriculture and forestry.

7.27 Agreed Project complete: lessons learned and proposals for new communication methods (eg IT systems, podcasts and web-based materials) are being developed by the Sector, HSE's new Treework web site is due to go live mid June 2009 and the Sector is working on producing a series of podcasts. [Demonstrated under Item 10.]

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

7.28 Ongoing - existing guidance has been reviewed and individual Project Groups are responsible for proposing/updating relevant guidance as and when necessary.

7.29 The industry needs reminding that AFAG leaflets should be used on-site as they provide a useful checklist of what constitutes good practice. Their status also needs clarifying in these documents. To be addressed when each leaflet is revised.

ACTION: HSE

D3 Improving Management of H&S & the Role of SSC at Forestry Sites (incl Lone Working).

7.31 Simon Parry suggested that the current scope of this new project is too large and that lone working should be treated as a separate (but linked) project. Members views sought on whether the guidance on lone working should be issued as:

- a new chapter in INDG 294;
- a new AFAG leaflet;
- a forestry information sheet; or
- be incorporated into AFAG 802 Emergency Planning.

7.32 Most members preferred incorporating advice into AFAG 802 and INDG294 with possibly a separate AFAG leaflet as well.

7.33 Work on revising INDG 294 is underway. The Project Group is currently considering the role of the Site Safety Co-ordinator (SSC) and a position paper is being drafted. Possible outcomes are:

- the SSC is acknowledged as the 'Deputy FWM' and therefore has a defined management role for which they are paid;
- the health and safety understanding of all employees on site is increased so everyone is aware that they have health and safety responsibilities for themselves and others;
- do nothing and lose the role.

7.34 Members agreed that there is a need to formally delegate responsibility for health and safety when the FWM is not on site but we must not lose sight of the fact that everyone has some responsibility for health safety, both their own and that of others. "SSC" may not be the right title for this function and further discussion is needed on this issue.

	<p>7.35 Alan Plom reminded the Group that this was exactly where the suite of VQs would be helpful, ie to encourage training and demonstrate competence to 'manage' health and safety on site, depending on the individual's level of responsibility.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">ACTION: Project Group</p>
8	<p>Standards work</p> <p>8.1 Jim Dewar and Simon Parry explained that AFAG/09/03 provides a summary of the topics and EN/ISO standards currently being considered by AFAG members involved in BSI Committee AGE 29.</p> <p>8.2 A draft report of the 25th meeting of ISO/TC 23/SC 15 – Machinery for Forestry - held in Finland in February 2009 has been sent to members. Any comments should be sent to Simon Parry. ACTION: Members</p> <p>8.3 Hans Fairley (Chair of AGE 29) asked for industry members to volunteer to join this BSI Committee. This committee is particularly relevant to arboriculture and forestry as it covers most of the key equipment used. It is essential to ensure that standards are relevant and machines are workable for the industry. Jim Dewar pointed out that it was only through this route that manufacturers could continue to be able to produce top-handled chain saws, a vital tool for the arb industry. Most existing members of the international standards committees are manufacturers (plus some regulators) and it is important that users are properly represented at all levels. ACTION: Members</p> <p>8.4 Update information to be put on AFAG and Treework web site. ACTION: HSE</p>
9	<p>Research</p> <p>9.1 AFAG 09/04 provides information on the current position with the various projects, funded by HSE and FC. FC funding for 2009 onwards will be restricted as money is tight. It was agreed that in the past joint funding has proved very beneficial.</p> <p>9.2 Members were asked to identify possible future topics. HSE would need to submit a business case, Suggestions included safe use of skylines, MSDs in Treework, cultural change and communication methods. Information to be sent to Jim Dewar - by Project leaders or any member - to enable him to build a portfolio of future needs. ACTION: Project leaders & Members</p>
10	<p>Communications</p> <p><i>Treework website</i></p> <p>10.1 Nick Sangha demonstrated the new Treework website which is due to go live in the middle of June. This has been built from scratch, based on AFAG guides, HSE information and articles, etc. It was well received by Members. Members will be alerted when it goes live and comments on content are invited. ACTION: Members</p> <p>10.2 Members were asked if they had any photographs that could be used to illustrate the site. Jim Dewar offered the use of FC's photo-library. Jim Dewar also to send link to FC research pages to Nick Sangha ACTION: Members/Jim Dewar/Nick Sangha</p> <p>10.3 Martin Lennon suggested that names of AFAG Members should be added to the site. ACTION: Sector/Nick Sangha</p>

	<p>10.4 Podcasts are also being developed by the Sector, eg based on material filmed at a Forestry Safety and Health Awareness Day (SHAD).</p> <p>Events</p> <p>10.6 Engaging Arboricultural Contractors SHADs are due to be held on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 16 June 2009, Houghall College • 21 July 2009, Coleg Gwent, Usk Campus • 22 July 2009 Sparsholt College • March 2010, London, date and venue TBC <p>10.7 3 Forestry SHADs are being planned for later in the year in Dyfed, Devon and Grampian. Dates and venues TBC.</p> <p>10.8 Alan Plom and Graham Munford are working with IOSH Rural Industries Group to develop an event on railway crossing safety, overhead power lines and trailer braking. To be held at Cannock on 22 July, it will include practical risk assessment sessions. [Details and application forms available on IOSH website.]</p> <p>Other Media - Articles</p> <p>10.9 It was agreed that press articles should be provided by Project leaders and Sector staff as and when necessary, to promote the work of AFAG and its project groups. Members to send copies of any previously published articles for posting on the Treework website and to inform Sector/ Project leaders of suitable opportunities in future, and what is needed.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">ACTION: Members</p>
11	<p>Any Other Business</p> <p>11.1 James Brown raised concerns about the current demographics of the forestry industry. Currently 35% of the industry is over 50 and in the last 18 months 30% of jobs have been lost. This will lead to major recruiting problems in the future. It is essential that new recruits are properly trained. Jim was asked to write a paper on this issue as it is directly related to the work of the Training and Certification Project Group. Key issues to cover are application of VQs, proposed apprenticeship scheme and potential funding routes. Paper to be written as a matter of urgency, in consultation with Steve Hewitt, Ros Burnley and Alastair Mitchell.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">ACTION: James Brown/Steve Hewitt/Ros Burnley/Alastair Mitchell</p> <p>11.2 Industry members also expressed concern about differing standards of training being provided by colleges. It was alleged that full assessments were not always carried out in accordance with NPTC rules. This should be referred to NPTC for follow-up. It was suggested that college instructors are not necessarily NPTC trainers/assessors and may not receive the necessary updates. Issue to be raised with Landex representative on AIAC.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">ACTION: Members/HSE</p>