

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

Minutes of the 13th meeting, held at Forestry Commission HQ, 231 Corstorphine Road, Edinburgh on 25 and 26 September 2007

Present:

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|-------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Roger Nourish | HSE (Chair) |
| Alan Plom | HSE (Secretary) |
| Jim Dewar | FC (Technical Secretary) |
| Jim Brown | Confor |
| Peter Jackson | UAG |
| John Price | LGE |
| Joe Bradley | NIFS |
| Simon Richmond | Lantra Awards |
| Robert Beaney | Unite (ex-TGWU) |
| Neil McKay | ICF |
| Emily Ramsey | FC (26 th only) |
| Colin Saunders | FC |
| Jim Burns | FC (26 th only) |
| Martin Lennon | UPM Tilhill (25 th only) |
| Alastair Mitchell | HSE (25 th only) |
| Frances Hirst | HSE |
| Frances Doherty | HSE (26 th only) |
| Stuart McGregor | HSE (26 th only) |
| Nikki Jack | HSE (Minutes Sec) |

1. WELCOME AND APOLOGIES

1.1 Roger Nourish welcomed everyone to the extended meeting, which was being held over two days at the request of members to enable more in-depth discussion on each of AFAG's projects. Due to different members being able to attend each day, the agenda would be adapted to maximise the benefit of their availability. He thanked FC for hosting the meeting and HSE's local Health and Safety Awareness Officer, Nikki Jack, for 'volunteering' to take notes. [**Secs Note:** For convenience and ease of reference the notes of the meeting are presented as listed in the agenda, not necessarily in the order discussed.]

1.2 Roger was pleased to welcome several new people to the meeting, in particular Pete Jackson (representing the Utility sector) and several co-opted members of the Project Groups who were able to join regular members during the two days. These included Martin Lennon (who is helping NPTC to carry out the review of the suite of chain saw Certificates of Competence) attending the first day which focussed on training and certification, together with Alastair Mitchell (lead for HSE on developing the new H&S VQs for agriculture). On the second day, AFAG members were joined by Jim Burns (FC), Frances Doherty (HSE Inspector) and Stuart

McGregor (HSE Noise and Vibration Specialist) for the discussions on relevant projects.

1.3 Apologies were received from Jason Liggins (HSE), Mike Volp (NATO), Gerald Bonner (TCIA), Bill Kew-Winder (AA), Donald Maclean and Brendan Burns (FCA).

2. URGENT BUSINESS

2.1 **Leitch Review** - The Leitch Report is now available on the Lantra (SSC) website. It contains a number of crucial pointers for agriculture and forestry and has financial implications for employers as it proposes that they should pay to provide skills updating for employees. Jim Brown reported on the Lantra Council meeting and informed the group that by 2010 it is expected that Government will require employers to pay for all education for employees up to foundation level.

3. MINUTES OF THE 12TH MEETING (19 APRIL 2007)

3.1 The minutes were agreed subject to the following amendments:

- Paragraph 4.7 The next APF Show is to be held in Cannock Chase, Staffordshire not Scotland.
- Paragraph 6.35 to be deleted as it duplicates 6.34.

ACTION: HSE – Amended minutes to be posted on AFAG Webpage.

4. MATTERS ARISING

[**Secs Note** - Actions from the last meeting not noted under 4 below have either been discharged or, where appropriate, discussion was deferred and is recorded under the relevant Agenda item/Project report.]

4.1 **Minute 5.5 – HSE resources** - AFAG members' concerns about reducing resources and the consequences of reduced inspection/enforcement activity have been relayed to the AIAC. A paper on the future of Agriculture (including arboriculture and forestry) within HSE is being prepared for discussion by the HSC on 9/10/07. At their last two meetings HSC members had expressed concerns about the continuing high level of accidents in agriculture. HSC had asked for more information on HSE's input into agriculture to inform a discussion on how accidents can be reduced in the industry.

4.2 The Chair of AIAC (Elizabeth Gibby) is drafting a paper detailing possible options and their resource implications for consideration by the Commission. AIAC members would be invited to comment on the paper before it goes to the HSC. Roger stressed that any decisions will have to be made in the light of HSE's overall diminishing financial and staff resources. Over the next 3 years HSE's 'flat cash settlement' will equate to a reduction of 20% in budget and ~30% cut in staff resources.

4.3 Following the recent HSC/HSE consultation exercise, the Minister had agreed that the Commission and the Executive should merge. This will give the Commissioners

greater responsibility and they will be looking very critically at what HSE does, with the probable aim of doing fewer things better.

4.4 Minute 5.8 – Business Impact Assessments - Alan informed members that the previous requirement for Government Departments to carry out a Regulatory Impact Assessment (RIA) has now been extended to 'Business Impact Assessments' (BIA). This applies to all new policy, guidance and ACOPs, etc, and may have implications for the Training and Certification (T&C) Project Group and others producing new guidance. AFAG members input will be needed to assess benefits as well as costs. Jim Dewar asked if the BIA would extend any consultation period. Alan said this shouldn't happen provided it is taken into account at the beginning of a project. Jim also asked whether the work of the Pesticides Safety Directorate would also be subject to BIA. It was thought they should be as the rules apply to all Government Departments, although they are involved in a statutory approval scheme and this process may be exempt. Sector to obtain more information on model assessments etc.

ACTION: HSE

4.5 Minute 6.23 – 'Future' ATV Safety Helmet – The report on concerns reported to Lantra Awards had still not been produced. Simon apologised and agreed to produce this asap and circulate it to members.

ACTION: S Richmond

4.6 Minute 6.34 – HSE's Insurance Initiative - Roger gave an update on progress. CMi & HSE have now completed their joint work to produce a risk assessment and underwriting system. This is based on HSE's self assessment software for farmers and is therefore currently aimed specifically at agriculture, but it could be extended to other industries. A major UK insurer has expressed an interest in introducing the system in farming and a pilot study is proposed. The company is particularly interested in the SME market and have said they would be prepared to adapt and extend the approach for use in arboriculture and forestry.

4.7 Roger explained that this would enable premiums offered to farmers to reflect the degree of risk that they actually present. This should result in favourable insurance rates being offered for those performing well (as assessed by the risk assessment process). Simon asked how the system would be verified. Roger advised that it will be run and monitored by CMi, who are a leading firm providing independent certified auditors on a range of risks, to businesses world-wide as well as Governments. A questionnaire will be completed at their auditors initial visit and this would be followed up by telephone. It would be made clear to businesses that untruthful/misleading answers could lead to invalidation of their insurance cover, and they had devised methods to validate answers/information provided.

4.8 Jim Dewar suggested inviting the companies involved to give a presentation to AFAG. Members could give them ideas and information on how the industry can apply the scheme.

ACTION: R Nourish

5. REVIEW OF STANDARDS OF WORK

5.1 360⁰ excavators - Alan updated members on the current position on roll over protection for 360⁰ excavators used in forestry. Jason was currently in New Zealand representing the UK on the review of ISO standard 8082. As drafted, this could lead to

a lower standard of roll-over protection for new construction-based machines used in forestry activities, eg planting on steep ground. Jim Dewar thanked HSE for agreeing to fund Jason's trip to New Zealand. Regulators were not often represented on ISO committees and Jason's presence was essential at this meeting to ensure that UK's key concerns were raised and properly discussed. Jason had just reported that he had some success in the negotiations and 360⁰ rotating machines used for forestry work will now be included in an Annex but the aim was to have equivalent standards to those for construction machines used specifically for construction work in forestry

5.2 Colin Saunders has been nominated to replace Jim representing UK at ISO SC 15 meetings, which will be amending ISO 8082. The ISO Committee will need to review the application of the standard to retro-fitted machines. There are still several phases to go through.

5.3 Members asked for on the relationship between ISO, CEN and BSI to be clarified. Jim explained that ISO Standards are applicable internationally, CEN Standards are applicable in Europe and BSI is responsible for standards in the UK. ISO Standards are normally adopted by CEN (if there is no equivalent European standard) and these have to be implemented in the UK as 'BS EN' Standards. Designing to these standards gives a presumption of conformity to comply with the European Machinery Safety Directive. Experience has shown that we have to be continually vigilant to ensure that ISOs meet the requirements of the Machinery Directive and to preserve standards achieved under our current legislation and adopted by the industry as good practice (ie 'sensible health and safety'). UK has had to formally object to prevent unsatisfactory standards being introduced in the past.

5.4 Members agreed that it was important to have an expert UK representative at ISO meetings and to have funds available to be able to send someone. Alan explained that delegates to European/international standards meetings are appointed by the BSI committee and represent UK, not their personal (business or regulatory) interests. However, these Committees mainly comprise representatives from manufacturers world-wide, and a wider perspective was sometimes needed. However, Government (DTI) funding was only available for non-Government officials to attend. Consequently, the bulk of the expense had been born by FC and HSE in the past. .

5.5 Roger added that whilst HSE may be in a position to respond to requests from the industry to attend, it is difficult to get funding to deal with issues that have not been flagged up in advance. In other Sectors, HSE had largely withdrawn from attending Standards meetings. The potential for HSE to be drawn into this area of work is very high and has to be prioritised and managed. The Agricultural Engineers Association (AEA) now act as Secretariat for BSI and currently deal with over 500 standards on agricultural-related machinery (this includes forestry equipment). The value of attending any meeting is considered on its merits and must be justified to HSE's senior management. The comments received from AFAG members had helped to ensure Jason's current trip was funded by HSE. .

5.5 Jim Dewar reminded members that 90% of current research resulted from and feeds in to standards. Pete Jackson asked how Members were notified about new standards or those coming up for review. Jim described the routine 5-10 year review process and advised that there are several AFAG members who sit on BSI/CEN/ISO

Committees. They pass on news of significant developments to others but the challenge is reading and responding to the large amount of often detailed papers sent out by BSI. These are available through the BSI website. It was suggested that an e-mail summarising new developments and alerting the industry to emerging issues may be beneficial.

ACTION: HSE/FC to consider and raise at BSI Committee AGE 29.

5.6 Alan suggested this update could be provided in HSE's 'Treework News' e-newsletter and asked Members for any feedback/comment on AFAG/07/07.

ACTION: Members

6. REVIEW OF RESEARCH

6.1 Alan introduced paper AFAG/07/08 which summarised current and completed research projects funded by HSE and jointly with FC. Roger expressed HSE's gratitude to the FC for continuing to provide funding and other resources to support these projects. Individual projects highlighted and discussed included:

6.2 **Mechanically-Assisted Take Down** – Jim Dewar reported that the second phase of this project will be looking at available techniques and identifying good (safe) practice. [Alan pointed out that we should no longer refer to 'best practice' as this could be interpreted as 'gold-plating']. Jim was concerned that HSE's had not yet agreed joint funding to enable this work to be taken forward from Phase 1, which had been funded by FC. FC have already committed further funds to Phase 2, but their money has to be spent by the end of March 2008. Roger explained this had been delayed following a review of research proposals necessitating further discussion with HSE's Social Scientist, as it was described as 'evaluation' rather than 'assessing different techniques'. It was expected to resolve this soon.

6.3 Simon and Jim Brown endorsed the importance of this work as there is significant potential for fatal accidents with the techniques in use at the moment. Alan pointed out that this technique is also becoming more relevant around overhead power lines following the introduction of new legislation requiring the energy network companies to take steps to preserve continuity of supply.

ACTION: HSE - A Plom/R Nourish to chase up funding.

6.4 Jim Brown agreed and highlighted the problem of single edge trees, which require special handling. This research needs to be flagged up to the industry. He offered to approach a forestry company for their support on this project.

ACTION: J Brown to contact forestry company.

6.5 Pete Jackson thought commercial organisations such as UPM-Tilhill and electricity network companies such as Scottish and Southern Power - who are regularly involved in removing edge trees - might also be prepared to contribute funding. The project group is to be restarted on Jason's return.

6.6 **Rigging and Dismantling** – Frances reported that the final draft of the research is due w/c 24 September 2007 and the report is due to be finalised by the end of October. Feedback from the industry on the work so far, eg at the Arborists' Trade Fair, has been very positive. Once the report is published it is hoped to arrange an

industry workshop to discuss the findings. An AFAG leaflet is also proposed and this will need to be included in the Communications Plan. Simon confirmed that Lantra Awards will update their training package in line with the research findings. (See also Project B4).

ACTION: C Saunders and F Hirst

6.7 **Noise and Vibration** - The HSL research into noise from wood chippers is nearly complete. This has found that better information is needed from manufacturers. The AFAG project group needs to meet soon to discuss the emerging research findings and draft guidance. (Discussed under Project C3.3)

ACTION: Project Leader - Colin Saunders

6.8 **Accident Analysis** - Alan Plom outlined Bomel's findings. They had made progress but their final report is still not ready. (Discussed further under Project A1).

6.9 **Future research funding by FC** - Jim Dewar reported that the FC have committed £11 million to research activities in the past, but have recently revised the way in which research is funded. For health, safety and ergonomics, they are creating a 3-year rolling programme of projects, which will be based on work that the industry thinks they should take forward. Jim also suggested each project should have a 'Dissemination Plan' indicating how the findings are going to be passed on to industry. Much research fed in to standards work, but recommendations can also be published in FC Technical Updates, AFAG guides and included at SHADs,

6.10 Jim asked Members to send him examples of working practices that need improving, so these can be considered when funds become available. He reassured AFAG that funds will still be available for research to assess and resolve issues that come up outside of the 3-year plan. Alan advised that these ideas for research should be captured in the table of research as well as in AFAG's workplan, under current, new or proposed AFAG Projects.

ACTION: Members to suggest topics to J Dewar.

7. VQ'S IN AGRICULTURE

7.1 Alastair Mitchell summarised paper AFAG 07/09. Alastair has led the Agriculture & Food Sector's work on the development of a suite of Vocational (Health and Safety) Qualifications for farming. These VQ's are different to NVQs and SVQ's. They provide an assessable and structured learning approach specifically designed to improve awareness and management of h&s. A similar approach could be developed for the arb and forestry sectors and he wanted to hear Members' views.

7.2 Three levels of H&S VQ have been accredited by QCA and are now available. Level 2 is the basic entry level, aimed at students/new entrants to the industry, Level 3 is for supervisors/foremen and Level 4 is aimed at managers. The suite of VQ's has been developed over the last 3 – 4 yrs to address the following issues:

- Fatal accidents – the lack of training appears to be the main causal factor.
- Culture of unwise risk taking – HSE want to raise the level of skills and competence within the industry.

- Gaps in management qualifications - especially in agriculture.

7.3 The VQs have been submitted to and agreed by QCA and have already been incorporated in College curricula. Six colleges are currently offering VQs within their courses, and another 5 are due to start this autumn. A total of 350 students have already achieved level 2.

7.4 A major driver for uptake of VQs has been the increasing demand for CPD within the industry. For example, the National Register of Sprayer Operators (NRoSO) requires CPD to maintain membership. It has also been proposed to make the incorporation of VQs within other qualifications mandatory.

7.5 Alastair advised that it would be relatively straight-forward to adapt the key elements of the VQ programme to forestry and arb, but this would require commitment from stakeholders if they wanted to use them. However, input and resources would be needed from within the industry as well as HSE, particularly to tailor the question sets for assessment.

7.6 He confirmed that there is no requirement to undergo compulsory training before taking the assessment at any level, but it is recommended. The VQ package was originally set up as a progressive assessment system, but it has now been revised so that individuals can go straight in at a higher level depending on their previous qualifications and/or experience.

7.7. It may be possible to use the NPTC's 'Global On-Line Assessment' system (GOLA) for the (remote) tests. Lantra SSC is also developing their 'On-line Competency Framework' system, which will incorporate the VQs.

7.8 The cost of registration and assessment for each level of VQ is: Level 2 - £40, Level 3 - £126, Level 4 - £136. This does not include cost of any training. Levels 3 and 4 include a workplace-based assignment.

7.9 Jim Brown thought the structure was good but pointed out that finance is a key obstacle as forestry workers won't want to do this in their own time or at their own expense. Unfortunately, VQ's do not attract Government grant support, unlike NVQs and SVQs. However, he felt that the Level 2 would be an excellent introductory level and this could be part of the horticulture and forestry NVQ. He also felt that VQs generally should be part of the new Government programme for 16-18yr olds (as they can't use chainsaws and sawmilling equipment until they are 18).

7.10 Pete thought the scheme would be good for arb and forestry, particularly as they are high risk industries with a poor safety record and there is no basic entrance level qualification in arb and forestry, compared with the construction industry's CSCS Scheme where the basic safety qualification is a pre-requisite to working in the industry. He suggested that a compulsory entrance level could usefully be introduced to the industry.

7.11 Jim Dewar found the paper useful and had compared VQs with the forestry-related NVQs and SVQ's. He found that much of what is outlined for VQs is already included in N/SVQs and he felt that we do not need something new and additional. It

is important to keep things simple for the industry and as N/SVQs are already in use and accepted by the industry, any proposals should be incorporated into the existing structure. It would therefore be useful to do a comparison exercise on what needs to be added to the N/SVQs. Apprenticeship schemes should also be similar to NVQ's & SVQ's.

7.12 Alastair pointed out it was important to ensure that learning outcomes are mapped to the National Occupational Standards (NOS), as these are the backbone to modern apprenticeships. The NOS are currently being reviewed by Lantra's Trees and Timber Industry Group.

7.13 Simon thought that forestry and arb versions of VQs are only likely to be taken up by those already complying with good practice and they would not address areas of the industry that don't pay attention to health and safety. Agriculture and horticulture have assurance systems in place to encourage registration for CPD purposes such as NRoSO and approval schemes, but there is no obvious similar tool to encourage people to buy-into an arb or forestry VQ.

7.14 Robert Beaney was not sure how VQs would fit into the existing system either. What is needed is something that will change peoples' mindset against risk-taking. This is a particular problem among experienced workers and he was not sure how this can be overcome, as there is always a drive to earn money.

7.15 Neil McKay suggested that health and safety performance has already been improved by UKAS (the UK Assured Standards scheme) which uses independent auditors, but he was not sure it would suit micro-businesses. We need to get health and safety education to people working at the ground level. Passport schemes might provide a lever.

7.16 John Price was unsure how VQs would help in the selection of contractors, and feared they may lead to further confusion, as NVQs already include essential health and safety elements.

7.17 Joe Bradley thought that VQs would be useful at entry level to prove basic understanding but there was still the problem of convincing those already in the industry of their added value. Level 4 VQ could be used to verify management of arb and forestry activities. Assurance schemes could be a potential driver and in Northern Ireland they could make VQs a legal requirement..

7.18 Jim Dewar reported that there had been an attempt to link Forestry Machinery Operator Certificates with NVQ's and SVQs previously, but this hadn't happened yet due to time constraints. The problem is that the current NVQ and SVQs are tied to the educational system and are not recognised by the forestry and arb industry as a way into employment. This is still based on obtaining Certificates of Competence.

7.19 Simon suggested that schemes such as this should be discussed by the AFAG T & C Project Group. There is a need to build on entry level qualifications and have CPD within the industry. A level 2 VQ could be the entry level, with achieving level 3 being considered as CPD. Level 4 would equate to the Forestry Works Manager

(FWM) role and could be made to fit arb as well. What is really needed is an equivalent of the NRoSO scheme for Arb and Forestry.

7.20 Jim Brown agreed that it would be good for youngsters at entry level but if it was made compulsory it would then be difficult to get funding. The Scottish Parliament is currently looking into what can be done with the existing, older age group of employees. Employers are also unhappy about paying for training for employees who then move on.

7.21 Roger concluded that although there was agreement amongst members that there would be advantages in having an entry level qualification, there was no consensus over the application of the higher levels. Further work was need in mapping these against the existing system. The addition of another system/tier may make things more confusing and members felt it was likely to be costly compared with what could be achieved.

7.22 Alan added that there could be advantages in introducing levels 3 and 4 for arb and forestry. For example, although the role of the FWM was defined, there were no set competencies currently described for this post in the NOS. A VQ would be useful to prepare someone and verify they are competent for this role. In this case it may be easier to start at the top and work down? There is also a particular need in arb for training to help clients choose competent contractors. When the Sector had met the Local Government Employers Organisation and leading trades unions at the HSE's LA Forum last year, they had recognised that additional training (and, ergo, a 'qualification'?) was needed for managers supervising and/or commissioning contractors within LAs. This has also been endorsed by comments of delegates to HSE's Arb Client SHADs.

7.23 Simon agreed that the AFAG T & C Group would need to have further discussions on this, but he still felt it would be easier to make the existing NVQs more relevant to arb and forestry.

7.24 Alistair thanked members for their comments. He recognised that funding was a problem and has been a factor in limiting the development and uptake of VQs. Funding is often available but it is not always obvious where to find it! For example, students at Ag colleges are eligible for funding, but each college needs to demonstrate how the VQ adds value to the overall learning aim. Unfortunately, those already in employment may find it more of an issue, as they would not be supported financially under the Government's current funding arrangements.

8. LAUNCH OF NEW AFAG COMMUNITY SITES

8.1 Frances outlined the new AFAG web community site. This includes a public and a private community site (intended for AFAG members to exchange information, comment on papers, etc). All AFAG Members will be invited to join the private community shortly.

ACTION: J Liggins

8.2 Jim Dewar stressed that maintenance of any website is essential in order for it to be current and of use to the industry. This must be adequately resourced (by HSE).

Alan agreed that a work plan should be drawn up and adequate time/resources allocated to this by HSE/Sector.

ACTION: A Plom

9. REVIEW OF PROGRESS ON AFAG PROJECTS

9.1 Alan introduced AFAG 07/10, summarising progress on all AFAG projects. Following the last meeting, AFAG's Terms of Reference had been revised before they were re-presented to AIAC. AIAC had accepted them. The Sector had reviewed each project and added new risks (including the implications of lack of resources). An update on progress and an action plan for each project is now needed for the next AIAC meeting on 29 October and this table will form the basis for the AIAC update.

9.2 The outputs and priorities of some projects have already been amended to take account of progress on the work and previous discussions at AFAG. Alan thanked Members for the time and effort that they have already put into these projects. The AIAC had recognised that AFAG and its many project groups are the most active sub-group within the AIAC and they formally thanked the many organisations and individuals involved, for their time and personal commitment.

9.3 The 'traffic light system' used in the paper to describe the priority and progress of each project was considered confusing. It was agreed that the definitions should be clarified in the key in the table. It was also agreed that the project priority and project status should be put in separate columns.

ACTION: HSE

[**Sec's Note** - The projects were not reviewed in numerical order due to the non-availability of some Project Group members on the first day and focus on T&C issues. However, the discussions are recorded in numerical order for convenience. The agreed 'traffic-light' colour code indicating progress/project status is also indicated.]

A.1 Accident Analysis

9.4 Alan introduced paper AFAG 07/11. Unfortunately, Bomel's report had not been finalised before the meeting due to their office move, but Jason had provided a summary. The draft report is to be revised to shorten the Executive Summary and tighten up the conclusions.

9.5 Although the research had not uncovered any unexpected findings this work was necessary to provide evidence and to establish a baseline for evaluation and measuring impact. Bomel have done a lot of previous work for HSE on analysis of accidents and other topics, including extensive work for the Ag Sector. They have access to RIDDOR data going back to 1996 and have developed a tool to analyse this.

9.6 The work was originally commissioned to identify the key causal factors of forestry accidents but was broadened to include arboriculture. AFAG had also asked for accidents involving chain saws being used in other industries to be identified. However, analysis was difficult as the available data can only be retrieved from the RIDDOR database using Standard Industry Codes (SIC). Also, the data set used only

runs up to 2003/04, as only data formally confirmed by HSE's Statistics Branch may be released.

9.7 Bomel has confirmed that training is an issue and Part 2 of the Report identifies training needs. However, it is difficult to obtain detailed information on training from RIDDOR reports because this is rarely reported by employers as a cause. Another bid for funding has therefore been submitted to extend this project to try to obtain more specific information.

9.8 Emily felt that the fact that the analysis tells us what we already know is no bad thing from an industry point of view. We now need to look at what we can do about it. The report highlights chainsaws and hung-up trees as problem areas. The number of chainsaw users is not that high and it would be useful to quantify this, as incident rates and risk would be correspondingly much higher than when averaged over the total number of workers in the industry.

9.9 Other key issues are also highlighted in Appendix 2 of the paper. It is important to look at how the industry can be improved and the project needs to be taken forward, including continuing to gather more (useful) data.

9.10 In discussion, it emerged that although the management structure in forestry is well-defined, there needs to be a better understanding of the various roles and communication issues need to be addressed. SHAD's are currently the only way HSE is getting to the forestry industry. Further analysis needs to be carried out to develop targeted interventions. Ag Sector has submitted a bid for Bomel to evaluate an arb client SHAD too.

9.11 Jim Brown was concerned that the contractors at the Bomel workshop he attended appeared to know little about the industry, or relevant guidance. He thought they might have used this as an opportunity to 'have a go' at 'the system', but their comments highlighted how little information was passed down by their employers. The problem was that contractors tend not to work for one employer long enough to gain any expertise within the company. They had little or no knowledge of the role of the site safety co-ordinator and no-one on the ground wanted to take responsibility on-site. This role was therefore being left to the timber owner or main contractor.

9.12 Roger observed that the workshop Jim had attended was specifically for contractors, but others were aimed at different audiences with different perceptions. Out of necessity, the research was based on relatively small data sets, but although 3 points on a graph are not really statistically representative of a trend, forestry did seem to be showing an improvement over the last three years. It was hoped that this would continue to be reflected in the RIDDOR stats.

9.13 Roger also pointed out that the small amount of HSE resource allocated to this industry means that we must concentrate on high risk areas. More analysis of the data is required to confirm the belief that the underlying cause of accidents is the lack of training and competence. This can only be teased out by checking the narrative reports of any relevant RIDDORs or investigation reports. We also need to compare incidence rates (ie the potential population exposed divided by the number of accidents, to give the rate per 100,000 workers). Ideally, the population should be

accurately known but HSE is bound by the Office of National Statistics rules and have to use given data sets, which may not be specific to enough. Alan suggested that the Lantra SSC review of the Trees and Timber Industry would contain relevant information on the number of employees. Jim Dewar also offered to look at the statistics produced by the FC.

ACTION: A Plom/J Dewar

9.14 Colin said it was important to recognise that forestry now involves less manual chain saw work and there was a shift of people from forestry to arb. This may be reflected in the stats and could indicate an increasing risk. Jim Burns added that the reduction in motor-manual chain saw work was making it more difficult to consolidate chainsaw training within the forestry industry.

9.15 Robert also advised that caution is needed when interpreting the findings as he felt that the application of training may be at fault rather than the training itself and commercial pressures can affect the way in which training is applied. After an accident people often blame lack of knowledge, when in fact it is lack of consolidation. Jim Brown agreed and suggested that people being struck by falling edge trees for example is due more to operators not observing proper procedures and ensuring a suitable escape route. We should be looking at what training injured persons had received, and where from/who by. He reported concerns about falling standards of training/assessment at some colleges, for example Colin asked whether HSE/Lantra Awards can provide a summary of what training courses have been given. Simon said this was possible and should be done.

ACTION – Simon Richmond/T&C Project Group

9.16 Pete Jackson suggested that RIDDOR information only provides the absolute minimum information. Companies own investigation records were likely to be more detailed. Roger accepted this but warned that some companies kept better information than others so it was difficult to compare them and could be misleading about certain companies. Ideally all sources of information should be pulled together. Colin added that the RIDDOR data examined by Bomel does not include ill health reports. This will also need to be addressed, to identify prevalence of HAVS, for example.

9.17 **Project status:** Amber/green. It was agreed that the Project Group should meet to review the report and consider the issues discussed. Jim Brown and Roger offered to join Emily and Frances.

ACTION: E Ramsay

A.2 - Training and Certification

9.18 Simon outlined the work and recommendations of the Group to date. So far, the outcomes have only been ideas and notions. No specific direction had been decided. The meeting on 19/4/07 agreed to explore existing CPD systems used in forestry to see what is working, where. This review still needs to be done. Existing 'approved contractor' and registration schemes such as CHAS, CSCS, UK Woodland Scheme, NRoSO, AA Approved Contractors, Trust Mark and ISA Certified Arborist Scheme do not really provide what the Group feels is needed. Whilst there is an existing entrance scheme for forest machine operation, chainsaw use, etc, the latter need to be revised as it only goes so far and basic Certificates of Competence (CoC's) do not reflect 'employability'.

9.19 Simon described a possible 'Register of Tree Work Operators' which could provide what the industry needs. New entrants would register - possibly with a requirement to obtain a level 2 VQ in health and safety as well as relevant basic units - to enable them to achieve a standard entry level 'CoC'. This certificate could be limited to a period of 3-5 years, which could then be extended depending on the training and work subsequently undertaken. Within that time-frame the operator would need to demonstrate CPD, eg via refresher training or attainment of the next level VQ. They would need to keep a log of the type of work activity they have carried out, eg on a week by week or monthly basis. A Register would also be needed to verify the number of CPD points achieved. After attaining a level 2 VQ, individuals could go on to complete levels 3 and 4 to demonstrate career progression.

9.20 Simon recognised that this scheme would be more acceptable if there was nothing already in place, but there is a long-standing system with which the industry is familiar. However, there is widespread agreement across the industry that the existing framework needs reviewing. Any system will need to be verifiable and auditable for it to be credible. For existing operators there would need to be a balance between 'grandfather rights' and introducing the new process. The 'carrot' to encourage buy-in could be a financial incentive, eg reduced registration fees to give them time to add to their CPD over say 3 to 4 years. Alternatively, employers could only take on people registered with the scheme (the 'stick' approach). Another key issue was who could/should operate any scheme and be acceptable to those in the industry. These ideas have yet to be discussed by the Group.

9.21 Pete agreed with the points raised but asked whether registration would be held by the individual, otherwise those working for small businesses might miss out. This was confirmed.

9.22 Jim Dewar felt that credibility is the major factor. Existing operator buy-in to the existing system is good but lower standard workers could bring the system into disrepute if it was not properly audited. For any system to work the big players must also be signed up to it. Many companies already have systems in place for assessing competencies before employment, so any new scheme would need to add value.

9.23 Neil McKay advised that another key requirement would be getting any scheme recognised by contract providers, eg LAs or Network Rail. The utility companies already look for CPD/proof of competence. Alan reminded members that the Contractors Health and Safety Scheme (CHAS) was also being established for LAs nationally, to help them identify and employ 'approved' contractors. This would be based on existing 'Approved Contractor' schemes, where these are verified and effectively policed.

9.24 Jim Brown suggested that any proposal must be looked at from 2 perspectives. At the top end are skilled arborists and at the bottom end are the 'cowboys' who do not have correct PPE, provide training, etc. Farmers who use a chainsaw should also be included. Perhaps an organisation like the CITB would be best placed to control any registration scheme?

9.25 Jim Dewar said employers should request proof of refresher training and individuals could keep their own logbook to record this. Pete was concerned that someone may have a certificate of competence but no proof of when that competence was last used. Simon felt that a credible central register would be essential.

9.26 Roger asked Simon to outline the next steps for the T&C Project. Simon asked Members to confirm which parts of the proposal they supported or rejected, and to advise what else they believe needs to be added to the 'options'. Following this, an agreed proposal would be circulated to the Project Group for comment/approval before consulting further with specific groups/interests in the industry, eg through relevant trade associations. It was agreed that we must be able to demonstrate clear benefits to individuals - employees and the self-employed - as well as small companies/employers, otherwise any scheme will not be widely accepted by the industry. Explaining our intentions and the benefits of the proposals effectively, including using the media, would be vital.

ACTION: Members

9.27 The potential cost of such a scheme was then discussed. These must be managed and kept reasonable. This could be done in a number of ways, eg generating income through CPD events rather than charging a registration fee. However the more watertight the scheme, the more costly it will be. It was suggested that it might be possible to make costs tax deductible, although this would need referral to HMCR.

9.28 Jim Dewar presumed any scheme would also have to be subject to a Business Impact Assessment before it was introduced. We would need to demonstrate benefits of any scheme as well as costs. Pete Jackson offered to forward some case studies illustrating the benefits of training to businesses, eg securing contracts by being able to demonstrate training/competence. Other members were invited to submit other examples to Alan Plom.

ACTION: P Jackson/Members

9.29 **Mapping of European Standards** - This second part of the T&C project was not discussed in detail, as there has been no significant progress. Jim Brown agreed to lead this part of the project. Roger is attending a meeting of the International Social Security Agency – Agriculture Section (ISSA) at Pamplona in October when he will be giving a brief update on training and certification in agriculture, including arb and forestry. He will be asking other member states if they can work together on migrant workers and compare national standards of training and competence. Jim Dewar mentioned a proposal from ENFE (the European equivalent of the FCA) which may conflict with what we propose. Roger and Jim to obtain/provide further information.

ACTION: R Nourish/J Dewar

9.30 It was agreed that the overall **Project Status** is 'Green', although a lot more work is required. Simon is to produce a summary paper outlining the options and proposals for a scheme for consultation of key groups by individual members of AFAG.

ACTION: S Richmond

B.1 Steep Ground Working

9.31 Neil Mackay reported on the guidance produced by the Group, with wide input from the industry. Alan reported that feedback from forestry SHAD's held since this was published had revealed concerns from Forest Works Managers (FWMs) about their role and responsibilities. The AFAG guide is open to interpretation and we need to allay FWM's concerns. It was suggested that articles in the journals could be used to clarify why the guidance can't be more prescriptive and to describe the implications of this. Jason to confirm FWM's concerns.

ACTION: J Liggins

9.32 Members felt that the key thing is that there is now a system in place and that the guidance should now be followed. However, it is not possible to have a definitive answer for all situations. Supervisors/managers needed training as there is not enough guidance available, covering all areas of work or how to make decisions. It was vital that all people working on a site must communicate with each other. Alan suggested steep ground working would be a good topic for VQ 'assessment'.

9.33 Jim Dewar reminded members that as well as the AFAG guides being used in training and refresher courses they also provide effective checklists. Supervisors should be using them on site although some may not have the relevant experience to do this. Simon observed that no AFAG guide was completely definitive for one specific machine as they tend to be generic. He suggested that machine suppliers might get involved in the production of machine-specific guidance, which could then be given out when equipment was sold. To date, manufacturers have not got involved with this, or supplying useful data. However, additional approaches could be made.

9.34 Roger did not think it was necessary to revisit/revise the new guidance at this stage. Perhaps a workshop could be arranged to clarify the situation. He recommended that the guidance should be re-launched at next year's APF event in Cannock. FC may also run a training day focusing on the whole issue of site management. Publicity is also needed for APF. Jason to consider future communications.

ACTION: J Liggins

9.35 Alan Plom flagged up the increasing use in skylines and suggested this should be considered as an area to extend this work as part of the AFAG work plan for next year. This was agreed and the **Project Status** = Green (complete)

B.2 Work at Height

9.36 Frances reported that the Arb Association's MEWPs Working Group had met on 25 September and the consultation document was due out soon. The business case for the revision of AFAG 401 had still to be approved by Dr Gibby. Technical input into the revision is still required. A Plom to progress bid for revision with Elizabeth Gibby. **Project status** = amber due to delay in guidance. [Secs Note - Updated by Sector to green in AIAC paper, as now rectified and on target for delivery.]

ACTION: A Plom

B.3 Welfare on Forestry Sites

9.37 Alan reminded the Group that this project had been given a lower priority as AFAG had agreed to deal with this issue as part of the Pesticides project (C4). However, this had come up the agenda as the GLA are requiring facilities to be available on-site for workers. Emily reported that the FC was considering this issue but AFAG needs to consider providing guidance for the forestry industry on what is reasonably practicable. This will depend on the number of people on site, remoteness of the work area/worksites, work activity, etc. Jim Burns suggested that cultural issues should also be considered.

9.38 Roger agreed that there is a need to reconsider the work programme as a whole and to reflect and decide on relative priorities/resource needs. There is a good argument for bringing this project forward due to the GLA interpretation of the HSW Regs and further clarification is required. To be discussed with J Liggins/E Ramsay.

ACTION: J Liggins

B.4 Rigging and dismantling techniques

9.39 Previously discussed under Research (Min 6.6). Initial feedback from the industry has been very positive. The final draft of the research is due w/c 24 September 2007 and the final report is expected to be approved by the end of October. A decision will then be needed on the best ways to publicise the findings. An AFAG leaflet is proposed. An industry workshop was also suggested to promote the findings. These will need to be included in the AFAG/Ag Sector Communications Plan. Simon confirmed that Lantra Awards will also update their training package in line with the research findings. **Project status:** Green.

ACTION: C Saunders, F Hirst and Lantra Awards

B.5 Machine-Assisted Take Down

9.40 Further to the discussions on delay with the FC/HSE research (Min 6.2 et seq) Jim Dewar reiterated that this work must be given high priority because take down of edge trees has resulted in a number of serious accidents due to the way in which the work is being done. Chainsaw workers are at increased risk and we should anticipate more accidents as the technique is already being widely used and likely to increase with expansion in clearance work around overhead power lines. Guidance is needed urgently on an acceptable technique and this would need to be incorporated in training. To enable phase 2 of the project to take place to assess different methods before the end of March 2008, HSE funds need to be released urgently as the latest the money can be received is November. **Project status:** Amber/green

ACTION: R Nourish

B.6 - Chainsaw PPE

9.41 The VAT on PPE 'spares' argument is still not resolved. Jim Brown has received no response from HMCR or HSE Safety Unit. The Sector are to pursue the issue.

ACTION: J Liggins/HSE

9.42 The issue of standards for chainsaw trousers used in arb is still not clear. Alan Plom/F Hirst and Jim Brown to discuss outside of the meeting.

ACTION: A Plom/F Hirst and J Brown

9.43 This is an ongoing project and as such the **Project status** = Green.

B.7 - Market Surveillance

9.44 Jim Brown raised concerns over ‘mulchers’ which can be a danger to other people. There can also be excessive noise when working close to buildings. Sufficient technical information is not always available from manufacturers and this should be pursued with the relevant department.

ACTION: HSE/J Brown

9.45 This is also an ongoing project. **Project status** = Green.

C.1 Promotion of Rehabilitation Services

9.46 This project was given a lower priority and currently has no leader. Alan reported that some work is already being done on occupational health services in Scotland but we need to find out what relevant work is taking place. Jason is in contact with the Partnership for H&S in Scotland (PHASS) and an overview is expected at the next AIAC meeting, which is to be held in Scotland.

Project status: Not yet established, so not assigned.

ACTION: J Liggins

C.2 Musculo-Skeletal Disorders

9.47 Frances explained that a Project Plan had not been produced for this Working Group as it had still not been convened due to Bruce Hatton’s resignation from AFAG. However, this project is also awaiting the detailed accident analysis by Bomel, although it was feared this would not identify the extent of the problem. Frances agreed to find out what information could be extracted from RIDDOR meanwhile. **Project status** = Red/amber.

ACTION: F Hirst

9.48 Alan suggested that case studies from the industry would be more effective than accident stats to ‘sell’ ideas and good practice to others. Pete reported that UPM are pre-empting problems by organising physiotherapists for staff with lower back problems caused by tree climbing, rather than lose their trained and experienced staff due to injury. It was also suggested that insurers could be approached for information and evidence on this aspect, which tied in with the Rehabilitation project (C1).

9.49 Members felt that research would be useful to inform guidance. Simon pointed out that any research into climbing techniques needs to be conducted by someone knowledgeable who can determine exactly what is needed. Jim Dewar agreed that we need to determine exactly what is being used in terms of climbing techniques and suggested that a survey could be carried out through the AA. He also suggested that the FC’s Statistics Dept could help to draw up a proforma questionnaire.

9.50 Jim Brown agreed and suggested that MSDs should also be looked at in other parts of the industry. Simon reminded Members that this group was originally set up to look specifically at MSDs in relation to tree climbing and aerial tree work - rather

than MSDs in arb and forestry generally. He therefore had reservations that the project may become too large and might be better carried out in two phases.

9.51 Frances reported that Paolo Baveresco has already done a lot of work on this area and suggested he should be asked to join the project group. Scott Fraser is also interested. Pete Jackson volunteered to chair the group and John Price also volunteered to join. A project group meeting will be convened as soon as possible.

ACTION: P Jackson/F Hirst

9.52 Alastair reminded members that the 2007 European Week for Safety and Health commences on 22 October with the theme 'Lighten the Load'. A wide range of examples of good practice have recently been posted on HSE's Agriculture webpage, which now has an area specifically for manual handling on farms. This includes a selection of common tasks that involve MH problems with a list of solutions and photographic illustrations. It also has a feedback facility. A similar webpage might be useful for arb and forestry? Members were asked to publicise this and European H&S Week through their networks.

ACTION: Members

9.53 Alan reported that the NFU had recently been involved in discussions in Europe which had led to agriculture being included as a 'priority' target industry during the European Week and their representative had been involved in producing guidance published on the EU web site.

9.54 Alan also reported that Jason Liggins had recently obtained video footage of manual handling during planting operations. This is being analysed by an HSE ergonomist. Members agreed that this could be used as a basis to progress the project and for communications, eg as a podcast. **Project status:** Upgraded to Green

C.3.1 Whole Body Vibration

9.55 This project was in its 3rd year. Exposure in a range of typical 'working operations' and from a range of machines have been measured by HSL. Their findings have been submitted to FC and the working group to agree. The 2nd phase which will look at ground preparation, wood fuel extraction, working on steep ground and felling and processing of hardwoods is due to start, awaiting HSE funding. FC proposed that WBV should also be measured during the drive to and from the 'working area'. This would include tarmac surfaces, forest roads and rough ground. FC considers this information would be valuable and are confident that they could justify the funding to contribute towards this research. Confirmation is needed that funding is available from HSE for Phase 2 to commence and reassurance from HSL that they are able to continue to support the project.

ACTION: HSE/Stuart McGregor

9.56 Jim Dewar pointed out that not much information is provided or available from manufacturers on WBV. This makes it difficult to assess potential operator exposure, although the portfolio of information is building, through the research. The long working hours typical in the industry is particularly detrimental to health and further information is needed so that guidance could be given to the industry on what can be done now to reduce exposure to WBV. Colin informed Members that there is already

a 'flyer' highlighting the key issues and precautions, although Jim Burns commented that this doesn't have the 'clout' of an AFAG leaflet. Stuart McGregor informed Members that HSE's Paul Brereton is producing guidance in the form of an Information Sheet. Alan reminded Members that if this is reproduced in the form of an AFAG leaflet then a business case will need to be approved by HSE.

Project status: Green.

C.3.2 Hand Arm Vibration

9.57 Jim Dewar said that there was nothing new from the Project Group to report on this topic. The information produced by the Group is available on the AFAG website. Stuart McGregor informed Members that a summary guide on HAV may be produced by HSE in the future. Emily reported that the FC is doing quite a lot of work on noise and HAV this year and she will share the information with Members when available.

Project status: Green, but should remain in the workplan.

C.3.3 Noise

9.58 The HSL research into noise from wood chipper noise has found that better information is needed from manufacturers. The information manufacturers are required to provide under the Machinery Directive does not relate to real operation. This issue is likely to take some time to resolve as manufacturers, importers and suppliers will need to be approached. This could be a project for HSE/Ag Sector next year. Relevant test standards also need to be considered. Jim Burns said there is a similar problem with the lack of information provided by manufacturers for safe use of machines on steep ground. There are more variables than the manufacturers admit to, because of the risk (and fear) of litigation.

9.59 Jim Dewar commented that the test standards which manufacturers use are generally devised to ensure reproducibility of tests rather than actual operator exposure. Initial findings suggest that standard ear defenders are not adequate. Alan added that if this is the case then the AFAG leaflet will need to be revised. Stuart McGregor commented that there is no agreed standard test specifically for wood chippers in work, so manufacturers only have to declare levels without a work piece. Work is being done to try and remedy this, by devising a suitable standard test work piece.

9.60 Jim Brown informed Members that some wood chippers are being used for other purposes, eg to recycle old wood such as pallets for fuel. This is a particularly noisy and dusty operation. Other HSE Sectors should be advised of this, via Ag Sector's Bob Hadway. **Project status:** Green

ACTION: HSE

C4 Pesticides

9.61 The study of potential exposure to alpha-cypermethrin during handling and planting of trees had been initiated by HSE Inspector Frances Doherty. The original report has been revised since the previous meeting, and is now finalised. It had also been subject to an FoI request for disclosure. NFU and TGWU had both expressed an interest in the findings and had requested a copy of the summary. Ways of disseminating the findings and recommendations now need to be agreed by the

Project Group. Emily said the conclusions need to be fed into a revision of AFAG 202, but implementing all the action points will not be easy. Jim Dewar added that there were still of couple of technical issues that needed addressing.

9.62 Roger agreed that the paper should remain closed until all the comments had been received from the FC. The project was not yet complete but was progressing. Project B3 on welfare facilities was also linked with this project. It was suggested that it was better not to link the legal requirements for washing facilities when working with chemicals, with the more general welfare/sanitary provisions.

9.63 Alan Plom informed members that AFAG leaflet 202 was due for revision in 2008 and this would be considered then. **Project status:** Green.

Project D1 Promotion of Best Practice

9.64 Alan reported that ‘Arb News’ has now been re-badged as ‘TreeworkNews’ as it includes information on forestry as well as arboriculture. The Sector are researching ways to improve communications using new techniques, eg Jason has been looking into the use of video streaming and podcasts, and a bid has been prepared to fund research to evaluate these as a means of communication in the industry. Napier University have already done some work on using podcasts and this will be discussed with them.

9.65 Jim Brown suggested that we should identify all the organisations that we should be in contact with so that we can better target our audience. Alan reminded the Group that although Bruce Hatton didn’t get a chance to formally convene the Project he did put forward a number of useful ideas which also need to be considered. These were incorporated in the summary paper presented to the last meeting (AFAG 07/03). Simon suggested that AFAG should set up a “virtual group” so that ideas could be circulated for comment. The project leader could then report back at each meeting. [Bruce Hatton’s replacement (nominated on behalf of the AA) is Bill Kew-Winder. He will be approached as a possible project leader.] **Project status:** Green.

ACTION: HSE/Project Group D1

9.66 Emily presented members with a copy of the FC’s new CD-ROM on working in forestry, produced as an induction/training aid for new staff.

Project D2 – Production, Review and Maintenance of Guidance

9.67 Alan reported that initial discussions had been held with HSE’s WebTeam seeking to improve the format of AFAG leaflets published on the web. These need to be reformatted as the current backed/fan-folded leaflets are not easy to print. Members warned that care is needed to avoid losing the clarity of the leaflets and advised that using black and white only is unlikely to convey the information in such an effective way.

9.68 Alan also reminded Members that the Sector had been contacted by the State of Brisbane, Australia, who had offered to help produce and provide joint funding for AFAG leaflets. This was proving very difficult to organise, due to HSE’s Communications Division’s concerns over potential copyright issues and use of logos.

Jim Dewar thought the idea was OK in principle, but we need to know exactly what input they proposed and confirmation that they would agree to adopting our standards.

9.69 Roger reported that HSE was now more permissive in what it allows in terms of multi-badging products/guidance. However, if HSE receives money from an external source then it is syphoned away directly to the Treasury and cannot be 're-allocated' by the Department. This could be avoided, eg by having printing costs paid for by another organisation. They could then be permitted to use the HSE logo (with an endorsement/approval) as well as their own.

9.70 Translation of guidance was discussed. There are concerns about ensuring accuracy and consistency. This is a cross-sector issue which needs a central policy decision, but some AFAG leaflets had already been translated in Scotland for migrant workers (using EU funding) and AFAG guides are widely used as a source of reference and as a basis for training in other countries, where they have already been translated into various languages, eg Spain. Jim Brown suggested that when comparing foreign qualifications, the use and acceptance of the AFAG guides in other countries is a good way of establishing that common standards have been adopted.

9.71 Jim Dewar advised that the current ILO Forestry guidance contains old information from FASTCO days and this needs updating. Roger said he would raise this at his ISSA meeting in Pamplona. There are also 2 ex-HSE colleagues working for the ILO that we could also contact, Martin Gifford and Peter Posche.

ACTION: R Nourish

9.72 A copy of HSE's Communications Division Model Business Case for publications is to be sent to project leaders. Members emphasised that as AFAG leaflets are the 'public face' of HSE and the committee, it is essential that they are kept up-to-date, accurate and available in print. Members were concerned that the business case for the revision of AFAG 401 still needs to be approved. Roger agreed to pursue this immediately with Elizabeth Gibby.

ACTION: R Nourish

10 PROJECT GROUP FEED BACK AND WAY FORWARD

10.1 Roger summarised the progress of each project by reviewing the table in paper AFAG 07/10. Clearly, not all projects are 'Green' at the moment and asked Members to decide what input is need to ensure they are Green by the end of the year. Also, some projects will be finished by the end of March 2008. Members need to identify any other new areas for work and decide what priority these should be given.

10.2 Actions needed on projects assessed as amber or red (ie not on target) are;

10.2.1 Work at Height – Work needs to start on revision of AFAG 401, asap.

ACTION: F Hirst

10.2.2 Machine Assisted Take Down – HSE needs to agree funding asap for work to commence and be completed by end of 2007/08.

ACTION: R Nourish

10.2.03 Rehabilitation – Work has not started on this yet but J Liggins has had some initial discussions with the Partnership for Health and Safety in Scotland and intends to progress this on his return.

ACTION: J Liggins

10.2.4 MSD – Arrangements now in place to form Project Group.

ACTION: P Jackson

10.3 AFAG Projects proposed to start in 2008/09 include:

10.3.1 - Welfare

10.3.2 - Rehabilitation

10.3.3 - Cableways/Sky-lines

10.3.4 - Working near Overhead Power Lines – Coordinated input needed to ensure that the standards and information in the Energy Network Association's guidance G55, HSE's GS6 and revision of AFAG404 and 804 are consistent.

10.4 Roger concluded that due to resource constraints within industry as well as HSE, existing work should be finished as far as possible, before new work can begin.

Members agreed that it was important to do a few (high priority) things well and to make sure there was proper closure of existing projects.

11. AOB

11.1 **Tree Management** - Simon reported that the FC had recently hosted a meeting to look at this issue from a landowners perspective at which it was agreed that national guidelines/principles, balancing the risks against legal duties were needed. The question arose as to who should be responsible for drafting this. Was it something that AFAG could do? Alan emphasised that the recent SIM on tree management was agreed at a very high level and HSE does not want to produce more specific guidance. He did not think it was AFAG's role to progress this and suggested it could possibly be done through IOSH or the Visitors Safety on the Countryside Group.

11.2 **New AFAG Members** - Simon proposed that Lantra SSC's new Industry Partnership Manager Ros Johnson should be formally invited to join AFAG. She is based in England, but has special responsibility for the trees and timber sector, and arboriculture in particular. She works with Clair Glaister (based in Scotland) and would be ideally placed to report on the work of the SSC's Trees and Timber Industry Group, and also on any response to the Leitch report. Roger said he would meet with her and raise the suggestion at AIAC.

ACTION: HSE

11.3 **Falls from Vehicles** - Alan informed Members about HSE's latest Campaign. Guidance is available on HSE website and a link to this will be put in the next edition of *Treework News*. Members were asked to publicise this through their networks.

ACTION: Members/F Hirst

11.4 **AIAC Open Meeting** - Roger advised that the next meeting of the AIAC will be an open meeting, in Scotland. This would focus on activities in Scotland, which had been very supportive of agriculture and particularly forestry, in view of its major contribution to the Scottish economy. Jim Brown is a member of AIAC and offered

to raise the profile of the event. He was arranging for NFU Scotland to attend. Other AFAG Members may also attend the open part of the meeting by contacting HSE.

ACTION: Members

12. DATE AND VENUE OF NEXT MEETING

This was provisionally proposed for the end of February/beginning of March 2008. Venue to be confirmed - Lantra House, Stoneleigh to be explored. Possible dates/venue will be circulated to Members asap.

ACTION: HSE