

## Forestry England Board Meeting Agenda

21<sup>st</sup> September 2022 09:00 - 12:05

The Speech House Hotel, Coleford, Gloucestershire, GL16 7EL

### Attendees

**Forestry England Board:** Julia Grant, Amanda Grist, Tristram Hilborn, Peter Latham, Jennie Price, Gurch Randhawa, Mike Seddon, Richard Stanford, William Worsley (Chair)

**In attendance:** James Simpson and Joy Ashford (Item 3 MS Teams), Mari Sibley (Items 4,5 & 6), Mat Maguire, (Item 6 MS Teams), Clare James (Item 7 MS Teams), Becky Rhodes (Items 1-10)

**Secretariat:** Rachel Mackintosh

**Apologies:** Chris Simpson

NO. / TIME mins	Start time	ITEM (Materials)	OUTCOME REQUIRED	LEAD
<b>Welcome</b>				
1. 10 mins	09:00	Chair's Welcome and Update		Chair
2. 10 mins	09:10	Declarations of Interest Approval of minutes, matters arising and action log.  Matters Arising	For information	Chair
<b>Items for Approval</b>				
3. 25 mins	09:20	Commercial Sensitive	Discussion & note	James Simpson and Joy Ashford
4. 30 mins	09:45	Commercial Sensitive	Approval	Chief Executive
5. 20 mins	10:15	Commercial Sensitive	Discussion & Approval	Mari Sibley
6. 15 mins	10:35	Commercial Sensitive	Approval	Mari Sibley and Mat Maguire
	10:50-11:00	<b>10 min Break</b>		
7. 20 mins	11:00	Health and Safety 6 month review including culture programme	Discussion & note	Clare James

<b>Management Accountability</b>				
8. 20 mins	11:20	CEO report	Discussion & note	Mike Seddon
9. 10 mins	11:40	M4 Finance Report	Approval	Amanda Grist
10. 10 mins	11:50	ARAC Chair report	Discussion & note	Julia
<b>Concluding items</b>				
11. 5 mins	12:00	AOB		Chair

<b>Future meetings:</b>	
6 Dec 2022	Virtual
All proposed visits are subject to Government guidance in place at the time.	



## Forestry England board meeting

20 July 2022 09:30 - 12:30

### MS Teams

#### Attendees

**Forestry England Board:** Julia Grant, Amanda Grist, Tristram Hilborn, Peter Latham, Jennie Price, Gurch Randhawa, Mike Seddon, Chris Simpson, Richard Stanford, Sir William Worsley (Chair)

**In attendance:** Mari Sibley

**Secretariat:** Rachel Mackintosh

#### Agenda items

##### 1. Welcome

| Item Lead: Sir William Worsley

The Chair welcomed members to the seventeenth full meeting of the Forestry England board. There are no apologies for this meeting.

##### Chair's update

The Chair provided the following updates:

- His stakeholder engagement with: NFU president, the Elm Conference at Kew Gardens, National Forest Company annual Parliamentary reception.
- The Commissioners met at Delamere Forest and Lobsack Nursery 20 and 21 June, and met members of the Mersey Forest
- Richard met with Defra Director Edward Barker for the quarterly review with the main discussion points included the risks transferred to David Hill, ALB Reform and Civil Service Headcount, and NCF opportunities and issues.
- Forest Services - an update was provided on the uptake of woodland creation offer noting whilst there was an increase in interest this was still behind target; there are now 36 outbreaks of *Phytophthora pluvialis*, and 7 new *Ips typographus* outbreak sites; the new director of Forest Services will be announced shortly.
- Forest Research - CEO of Natural Environment Research Council, Sir Duncan Wingham, has visited Alice Holt, he is keen to support growth in a tree-related research community in the UK; Defra have developed a Research and Development Strategy to underpin the NCF that should result in Forest Research being offered several research projects (supported by Natural England and the Forestry Commission); the process has been agreed with Defra for undertaking a mid-term review for a Monitoring and Evaluation Framework for the NCF.
- Forward look: further meeting of the Commissioners, meeting with Permanent secretary Defra, Commonwealth Games mountain biking event at Cannock and Chief of Staff due to join 25 July. Following a question there was clarification of the role of Chief of Staff as running Chair and FC Chief Executive office, co-ordinating policies, and managing the relationship with Defra.

##### 2.1 Declarations of Interest

The update to Chair's register of interests noted.

There were no declarations of interests for this agenda.

##### 2.2 Approval of Board minutes

The following minutes were agreed as a true record:

- The amended minutes of Forestry England Board 03.03.22
- The meeting of Forestry England Board 10.05.22
- The extra meeting of the Forestry England Board 22.06.22

### 2.3 Actions

The updated action log was reviewed and agreed. Two actions remained in progress and rolled into forward look. The additional paper on action 98 on retail activity was noted.

### 2.4 Matters Arising

There was a discussion on action 98 Retail paper - Tris summarised the paper, the focus for commercial recreation was opportunities that gave the greatest value and scale, however there is a place for retail, looking at other organisations who were moving to online retail and licensing partnerships / branded products were likely focus areas. Board members welcomed the comparators to other organisations and noted that it was important to keep watch on the visitor experience offered, as retail has value in terms of profit but also engagement.

## 3. CEO report

| Item Lead: Mike Seddon

Mike drew attention to:

- Honour of the Royal Forestry Society (RFS) “Best of the Best” award for multi-purpose forestry to Bramshill Plantation in the South Forest District, noting the Beat Manager came in for significant praise from the judge. Board passed on their congratulations to the team.
- All 15 staff briefings now completed; key notes staff pleased to be in a room together, there was a positive attitude to take forward Growing the Future, with main underlying concern being the cost of living.
- 2 submissions to the minister have now been approved: the lease with York City Council for the first woodland partnership is approved, and the delegation to Defra director level to approve the acquisition of land of up to 200ha which will greatly streamline the process.
- Appointments:
  - Individual Giving Manager will join at the end of the calendar year to lead a different way to connect people with the nation’s forests
  - 2 new Forest Management Directors appointed
  - Head of IT appointed
- Safeguarding: there have been lessons learnt for the teams from an event happening outside the nation’s forests.
- Risk report: note the increasing level of risk around staff retention in a competitive market which will be the biggest risk to delivering Growing the Future this year. Recruitment is taking place, but of less experienced staff that also slows down delivery.

The discussion that followed included:

- Confirmation that a safeguarding report will go to Commissioners in December.
- Encouragement to shine a light on all the fantastic work done in the organisation through other means e.g. Defra newsletter.
- Use of deep dives in meetings for the Board to investigate different areas e.g. strategic issues around workforce.
- Consideration of using the extension of the Winter Lights events to invite a greater diversity of audience into the forests e.g. could Festival of Lights for Sikhs and Hindus could be brought into plans for Halloween lights at Sherwood.
- Offer of a high level connection with the new CEO of the Ramblers accepted.

- Opportunities for development of digital marketing that will come with CRM and associated updated permissions. The team was encouraged to look at messaging from the viewpoint of someone who knows nothing about Forestry England.
- Reasons for the woodland creation scheme falling behind targets, including uncertainty in the market and the grants available to landowners. It was noted that the Forestry England was in discussions with Defra on what could make the Woodland Creation Partnership offer more attractive.
- Impact on health & safety of having 20 - 25% of foresters commence in post since 2019.
- Recommendation that the electric vehicle risk be re-assessed as probably not a “red” risk compared to others on the register.
- Encouragement to think big with approach to investments. It was noted the investment plans would be coming to the board later in the year.
- ANPR: the balance between collecting payment and enforcement was discussed.
- Progress on actions following the Ofsted inspection of apprenticeships was discussed.

### Health and Safety report

Tris noted that staff briefings had included a health & safety workshop, these were now complete and had provided a lot of feedback that will form the backbone of the H&S action plan for the coming years.

He reported on two RIDDOR incidents and actions that had been taken and noted that the Board had asked about the reporting of contractor RIDDOR incidents and confirmed these would be included in the report going forward.

Action Items	Person responsible	Deadline
Connect Paddy Harrop to Gurch for contacts re Festival of Lights suggestion	Mike Seddon	21.09.22
Consider a workforce deep dive for the September Board meeting	Mike Seddon /Rachel Mackintosh	21.09.22
Follow up with Jennie Price link to Ramblers CEO	Mike Seddon	21.09.22
Review the electric vehicle risk level	Mike Seddon /Rachel Mackintosh	21.09.22

## 4. M3 Finance report

| Item Lead: Amanda Grist

Amanda gave her first finance report to the Board. She noted that:

- Trading performance for the first two months was £2.1m better than budget, driven predominantly by £1.9m underspend against the non-pay budget.
- The headcount being 13% down is a recurring theme throughout the report
- Timber, admissions and car parking income are all showing an adverse variance.
- Effect of inflation on costs is beginning to come through more strongly.
- The main areas that need further investigation being around recruitment and what is deliverable in this environment, and to consider how to respond to the increased costs that are being seen.

The discussion that followed included:

- Confirmation that the cash balance does not attract interest.
- Consideration of the drop in admissions & carparking, noting that it had been anticipated that there would be a drop off from the high levels seen during the pandemic, but still was higher than pre-covid levels, the forecast will be reviewed.

There was further comment that with the cost of living crisis we should consider how we incentivise visits; Tris noted that work on tariffs was part of the business planning for this year that could come to the Board later in the year.

- The destination of visitor spend between the concessions and Forestry England was discussed with encouragement to look at visitor perception of this. Tris noted the arrangements with operators, acknowledging the communication point. He noted the recreation model focused on those areas where we have the greatest expertise, delivering Growing the Future and where there is a good margin. It was also noted this linked to the strategic work on how we could increase revenue to deliver greater public benefit.
- More robust consideration of value for money and effectiveness would be picked up with the benchmarking being proposed in the board effectiveness agenda item.

Action Items	Person responsible	Deadline
Include the approach to tariff work on the forward look for December or write round.	Tris Hilborn	06.12.22

## 5. ARAC Chair report

| Item Lead: Julia Grant

Julia provided an update on the Annual Report timetable following the issues experienced this year. It was noted the focus would be on contracting with NAO / external auditors with a clear signed commitment to stick to the agreed timetable for the coming year.

## 6. Commercial Sensitive

## 7. Forestry England draft risk appetite statement

| Item Lead: Tristram Hilborn

Tris led the item, noting that the purpose of this was to have a shared understanding of our risk appetite for the organisation, which will empower colleagues across the different areas of the business. The Board were asked to consider and agree the overall risk appetite for the organisation of cautious - open, and the risk categories for the different functions within the business.

In the discussion the Board considered that the overall organisation appetite level of cautious - open was right, however there was discussion on the individual function areas below that, with various suggestions made. A format was agreed whereby each functional area would have a risk appetite level, with exceptions to that noted; the example noted that to encourage innovation, IT and technology should have an open appetite, but within that there needed to be an averse appetite on cyber security.

The Board asked that the finalised version comes back to a future meeting.

Action Items	Person responsible	Deadline
Develop the risk appetite statement and bring finalised version to a future meeting.	Tristram Hilborn / Rachel Mackintosh	06.12.22

## 8. Board Effectiveness review

| Item Lead: Mike Seddon

Mike introduced the results of the annual Board effectiveness review and progress on the Board improvement plan. He noted that the results indicated that overall board members

felt the board was working effectively, with no standout area with a low score, therefore for the improvement plan the recommendation was to look at the three areas with the greatest range of scores: performance measures including benchmarking, effective working with ARAC, and to finalise and embed the risk appetite.

These areas were discussed and agreed. In addition, the proposal for a targeted external review of governance was considered potentially useful and to be investigated with the other parts of the Forestry Commission. The benefits of non-executive Board members meeting separately would be considered by the Chair and FC / Forestry England Chief Executives.

Action Items	Person responsible	Deadline
The Board improvement plan to be updated with the agreed improvement areas.	Mike Seddon/ Rachel Mackintosh	06.12.22
Proposal for external review of governance to be considered with other parts of FC.	William Worsley / Richard Stanford /Mike Seddon	21.09.22
Benefits of non-executive members meeting separately to be considered further.	William Worsley / Richard Stanford /Mike Seddon	21.09.22

## 9. Annual review of Terms of reference

| Item Lead: Chair

The Chair noted this was the annual review of the Board's Terms of Reference. Rachel outlined the main changes that had been proposed by Board members prior to the meeting. These were agreed with no further amendments proposed in the meeting.

The amended terms of reference were proposed to the Commissioners for approval.

Action Items	Person responsible	Deadline
The proposed updated terms of reference to be recommended to the Commissioners for approval.	Rachel Mackintosh	21.09.22

## AOB

The proposed schedule for the September Board visit and meeting to the Forest of Dean was noted.

The meeting ended at 12.04

**21 September 2022**

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**Paper Title: Commercial Sensitive**

**Under the freedom of information act 2000, exempt information this paper has been withheld from publication as per Section 43(2): Prejudice to commercial interests.**

**If you wish to request this paper please contact Rachel Mackintosh at  
[Rachel.mackintosh@forestryengland.uk](mailto:Rachel.mackintosh@forestryengland.uk)**



**21 September 2022**

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**BOARD PAPER****Paper Title:** H&S Culture Programme - Look Out, Look After**Author/Presenter:** Clare James**Paper Requirement:**

Decision Required	For Approval	For Steer	Official/Commercial Sensitive
		X	

***Executive Summary of key points and action required***

The paper provides a summary of the activity within Forestry England to progress the health and safety culture improvement initiative, Look Out, Look After.

The Board is asked to note the content of the paper, progress to date and provide a steer on the performance measurement proposals.

***How this paper takes forward Forestry England's strategic aims in Growing the Future?***

To review the three KPIs identified within Growing the Future which aim to illustrate the impact that the Look Out & Look After initiative is having as it progresses.

***Core messages for the non-executives to promote***

Getting health and safety right throughout Forestry England is a fundamental requirement for us all. Everyone needs to play their part in the Look Out, Look After initiative.

**Content****1. Background**

In 2021 a new Health and Safety culture programme was launched in Forestry England. The aim is to build on our good performance to date and positive staff survey results to improve our overall health and safety performance.

The programme is being delivered over an initial three-year period with the support of Broadhead Global who are specialist consultants in health and safety behavioural change. However, this work will require a long-term effort to achieve the changes in culture that we are seeking.

Getting health and safety right in Forestry England is a fundamental requirement and is a key objective within Growing the Future.

# Health & Safety Culture Programme

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## 2. The Programme & progress to date

Much of the work in 2021 was focused on gathering baseline information to understand the culture within Forestry England and the key issues that colleagues were concerned about. Information was gathered through a combination of 1:1 interviews, focus groups and line manager led meetings with their teams.

Since the beginning of 2022, the Look Out and Look After (LOLA) programme has gathered considerable pace, commencing with the Managers Briefings at the beginning of the year.

The Senior Leadership Team have undergone training to ensure a consistent level of understanding with regards their roles and responsibilities in developing a proactive health and safety culture. Part of the training also included an interactive workshop to establish what the organisation considers to be the vision for Forestry England's culture and the benefits that it should bring to staff.

This vision was developed and agreed in the Spring and was launched and communicated across the business through a series of face-to-face staff briefings.

There are four key areas of work that will remain the focus of our delivery plan for 2022. These are:

- **Health and Safety Vision** - The working group has now produced the vision and work continues with the roll out promotion, including through staff briefings, videos and appropriate merchandise.
- **H&S Resources** - This group is considering the Health and Safety team's ability to help embed the H&S culture programme and support day-to-day activity. It is recommended that 6FTE H&S advisers and one Construction, Design and Management (CDM) specialist be recruited into the team. This resource would be embedded within District teams, but report back to the national H&S Team. The affordability of these proposals will be considered as part of the 2023/24 business planning round and consideration given to phasing recruitment over 2-3 years.
- **Back To Basics** - The working group is considering the H&S basics that we may need to improve across Forestry England. Interactive sessions have been undertaken at each of the national staff briefings to determine what staff consider the priorities. The results have now been RAG rated and include issues such as welfare facilities, taking a break when working at a desk and provision of vehicles. The priority actions will be agreed with the Senior Leadership Team in October with a campaign being launched in winter 2022 that will roll into 2023.
- **Staff Engagement & Governance** - This working group is considering the re-launch and improvement of H&S Committees as a forum to raise issues, share information and promote the H&S culture work. Alongside this, the group is

# Health & Safety Culture Programme

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considering the most appropriate channels to keep staff engaged with the H&S programme.

As we move into 2023, we are considering the next set of actions, which will include:

- **Leadership training** - The successful training undertaken by the Senior Leadership Team will be rolled out to the next level of management. This will commence in October 2022 and into 2023.
- **Integrating of training into the Professional Managers Programme** - A blended learning offer of this training will be added to PMP and is currently under development
- **Just Culture** - A review of what is meant by and how we can implement a Just Culture to support the open and honest reporting of incidents and encourage learning.
- **Safety Basics** - Roll out of the safety basics campaign being finalised in Autumn/Winter 2022.

Alongside the above, the Steering Group will also review other actions identified in the original report from our consultant partners, Broadhead Global and generate a comprehensive plan for the year.

A temperature check to assess the impact of the initiative is ongoing by Forestry England's H&S advisers as they attend site visits, using a set of 4 standard questions which they can pose to a range of staff.

### 3. Performance & Monitoring

Our current live incident reporting data does not provide a full reflection of health and safety performance in Forestry England. Whilst we can review injury incident and near miss trends for staff, contractors, members of public and volunteers, there may be incidents that go unreported. It is also a lagging indicator of what has happened or gone wrong, rather than a proactive indicator which demonstrates what we are doing to address the trends.

Better insight is proposed in the Growing the Future scorecard, measuring the effectiveness and progress of the Look Out & Look After (LOLA) programme.

Growing the Future Health & Safety Scorecard proposes three proactive measures:

- A. how many lessons learned briefings have been issued to the organisation following incident investigations;

In 2021, 13 lessons learned were issued to the organisation. To date, in 2022, 6 have been issued.

# Health & Safety Culture Programme

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Whilst more briefings could be seen as a sign of more significant near misses or injury incidents occurring, we can be certain that the investigations are going to improve health and safety management if all of the lessons are thoroughly embedded into operations.

There is currently no means of allocating and tracking the completion of these lessons. A potential solution is to enter all actions from lessons learned, audits, site visits etc onto the Action module within the incident recording system. However, this would create an additional administrative burden for the organisation, both in terms of uploading the actions and in their completion and close out. Further consideration of this is taking place through the LOLA programme Engagement & Governance Working Group, with recommendations expected in October.

- B. the number of days it takes to complete an incident investigation (or to be more specific, the average number of days that an investigation is overdue by);

In the last 2 months, the number of days taken to complete an incident investigation has increased slightly. A focussed effort is required to ensure that all older incidents can be closed out and to maintain the rigor with which more current events are addressed and investigated. This is now being monitored through the Senior Leadership Team, and communications are planned through ROOTS / internal communications channels to promote swift incident investigation.

- C. the uptake of the mandatory training elements that the FC Executive Board have approved for completion by all staff.

The uptake of mandatory training elements is not increasing significantly and further work is required to remind staff of its requirement. Communications are planned now to coincide with performance reviews to ensure time is allocated to this task and that training is tracked and undertaken.

## 4. Resources

The programme is primarily underpinned through existing resources, and no additional resources are required for performance monitoring. However additional resources will be considered for the following areas as part of the Business Plan 23/24 process:

- Additional resources proposed for the Health, Safety and Technical Training Team as described in section
- Resources to deliver the Safety Basics programme, once the focus areas have been agreed (e.g. capital may be required to upgrade welfare facilities)

## 5. Communications

A comprehensive communication plan has been developed for the LOLA programme, which is being supported with dedicated resources. Over the next 6 months some of the key activities to further engage Forestry England colleagues include:

# Health & Safety Culture Programme

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- Promotion of the H&S vision through workshops, videos and merchandise with key messages.
- Roll out of Health and Safety culture training to middle managers from October.
- Launch the Safety Basics campaign which is expected to launch in Autumn/Winter 2022.
- Launch of refreshed District and National H&S committees in Autumn 2022.
- Finalise review of engagement channels to ensure communications are reaching all staff (particularly front line staff).

**Clare James**

Head of Health, Safety & Technical Training

9<sup>th</sup> September 2022



**21 September 2022**

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**Paper Title: CEO Report**

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21 September 2022

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