

**MINUTES OF THE FPS QUARTERLY MEETING**

**Date:** Thursday 20th July 2017

**Time:** 9.30am

**Location:** Friends House, 173,177 Euston Rd, London, NW1 2BJ

**PRESENT:** Chris Primett Aarsleff

Martin Blower Bauer

Paul Wiltcher Cementation Skanska

Steve Hadley Central Piling

John Chick Expanded

Craig Macklin Franki Foundation

Yvonne Ainsworth JRL

Jim DeWaele Keller

Ian Alcorn Roger Bullivant Ltd

Shaun Davison Van Elle

**In the Chair:** Philip Hines Bachy Soletanche

**In Attendance:** Ciaran Jennings FPS Secretariat

Grace Hawkins FPS Secretariat

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| **No** | **TOPIC** | **ACTION** |
| **1** | **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE** |  |
|  | Apologies had been received from Alasdair Henderson (BAM Ritchies), Mark Sheridan (BAM Ritchies), Mark Pennington (BBGE), Niall McGill (FK Lowry), John Hollingsworth (Martello Piling), Andrew Waghorn (Murphy Ground Engineering) |  |
| **2** | **MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING** |  |
|  | The minutes of the meeting held on the 24th April 2017 were approved. |  |
| **3** | **MATTERS ARISING** |  |
| **i.** | **Piling Apprenticeship and NOS Review**  Ciaran Jennings reported the Trailblazer has been approved, however three are three issues that need to be resolved:   * How the training is to be delivered * How the External Quality Assurance process will work if we are partnering with the CITB * Whether the an SAP should be run in October in expectation that the Trailblazer will not yet be ready   He informed the group that the funding cap for the money that can be claimed from the Apprenticeship Levy fund had been raised to £15k. This was following a challenge from the Trailblazer development group and was a significant success.  Training delivery: Currently the SAP training is patched together from different members providing the modules, however under Trailblazer rules there needs to be a single training provider. CITB have put themselves up for this but they will need to subcontract members of the FPS. The details of how this will work and the agreements to facilitate it need to be put in place. The Secretary was not optimistic that this would be achieved before an October start date. He also commented that there is also an option for Members to become employer providers to deliver the training directly themselves. However this means a member can only train their own people, members interested in this option should register with BIES.  EQA Process: The FPS has put itself forward as the external quality assurance body for the Trailblazer in order to ensure that the FPS has direct quality control influence on the people being qualified to work in the industry. This requires the FPS to provide assessors to end point assessment providers on the scheme. The CITB have offered to deliver an EQA process, however this will need significant adjustment in order to incorporate the FPS provision of assessors. The Secretary is in the process of negotiating this.  SAP October intake: Ciaran asked if the Committee wants to run the existing SAP programme in October or alternatively wait for the Trailblazer. It was noted the existing SAP will be fully funded by CITB.  Phil Hines commented that Secretariat Bachy Soletanche have apprentices lined up and it would be good to be certain a training programme is going ahead so that preparations can be put in place. It was agreed that it was desirable to run an SAP intake in 2017 in the face of uncertainty over the SAP.  Martin Blower noted there was some recent uncertainty from the government regarding the funding and the CITB levy. Ciaran replied he has been led to believe the CITB will fund the Levy in the short term. Steve Hadley asked what is the minimum number of candidates for the training programme to be cost efficient, the FPS Secretariat informed the Committee it was nine candidates to be cost efficient and there is currently interest for eight candidates to be placed on the training. | **FPS Secretariat** |
| ii. | **Build UK PQQ Proposals**  Build UK are trying to create a unified PQQ system, it is split into two sections for high risk and low risk professions. Piling falls into the high risk category that requires a more in depth set of questions to be answered. They are looking to approach trade associations for their audit schedules. The issues for FPS were summarised:   * FPS would required to become an auditing body for the whole industry * Audits would need to be conducted on an annual cycle under the current proposals * Non-members could potentially hold themselves out as being on a par with FPS Members.   Steve Hadley advised there was concern at the Executive about the implications of non-FPS companies being audited to a FPS standard but that they had decided to raise this with Quarterly as there was not a consensus around the best way to respond.  Jim De Waele commented the Build UK proposal is like the Builder Profile Launch which was unsuccessful, the PQQ proposal runs the risk of creating another pre-qualification process rather than replacing the existing ones. It should also be considered that not every company in the industry is a member of Build UK. Some of the bigger clients have their own highly mature audit systems. Jim stated that FPS audit is a registration process rather than a true audit, which would require more governance and adherence with European auditing standards. If this went ahead the FPS would be required to set up a board with non-FPS client representation and would be required to be UKAS approved. Jim continued to explain the FPS has previously steered away from this formal type of audit, he believed the FPS should not become an accreditation provider and pointed out that there would be nothing stopping Achilles or other PQQ provider companies becoming providers. He did not believe it was in the interests of the industry to have an accreditation body for the geotechnical industry as it would dilute the FPS’ value and intention. Jim confirmed he does not support development of another PQQ scheme and changing the FPS audit process to accommodate this. However, he thought it might be viable to provide Build UK with our question set.  Chris Primett strongly agreed with Jim and felt the FPS risks losing control of the registration scheme.  Phil Hines stated the FPS cannot be ambivalent on agreement; providing a question set would result in the FPS having an audit every year rather than every three years. The Committee agreed the position should be to decline involvement as the scheme is currently envisioned. However the FPS will support any PQQ that unifies existing schemes rather creating a new one.  Ciaran replied he senses Build UK are keen on it, but the FPS will need to signal to Suzie Nichols their concerns. Simon Jones of Keller is currently representing the FP and sits on the Safety and Training Forum, he is previously experienced in this field. He attended the last meeting, however Build UK have been quite poor with communicating what their committees are doing.  In discussion it was agree that the FPS need to have a senior representative within Build UK in order to influence the organisation. The point was made that SEC had put out a powerful statement on Brexit which Build UK had not pushed on in the same way. Similarly the work on the issue of retention had slipped backwards after the second workship on the issue. Jim De Waele commented he believed the representative needed to be a member of the Executive Committee, but failing that he would be willing to fulfil this role.  Phil suggested Alasdair Henderson should contact Build UK as FPS Chair and request the FPS have a representative at a senior level in order to have greater involvement and influence within Build UK.  It was also suggested to request someone from the Build UK come to the next Quarterly meeting to present on the organisaiton. Craig Macklin commented it would be beneficial for new members who have not been exposed to NSCC/Build UK. | **Alasdair Henderson**  **FPS Secretary** |
| iii. | **HS2 Delivery Schedule**  At the last meeting, it was reported HS2 have approached the FPS; they want the FPS to provide data on Large Bored Piling Rigs owned by Members. The FPS asked them for a deeper discussion on the delivery plan and the framework capacity. Phil Hines informed the Committee HS2 cancelled the scheduled meeting, this will need to be re-scheduled. | **FPS Secretariat** |
| iv. | **BIM Survey Res**ults  John Chick reported on the results of a survey that was circulated to members with the intention of shaping an understanding of where the FPS is with Digital Construction at a strategic level.  The survey results indicate 80% of participants are pro BIM and the remaining 20% feel the cost of adoption has not yet been worth the investment. There was a consensus there is generally a problem with PDF information interrupting the flow of data within a project. This generally prevents a digital model being used as the design teams are not seeing the original drawings. It was also reported that software platforms are expensive and need adaptation in order to make them fit the business.  Currently clients are not asking for BIM other than on high profile public projects which require Level 2 compliance and seek to deliver at Level 3. It was commented that BIM forces collaboration, but the industry is not used to working in this way. John commented that a lawyer contact of his had commented that there is no legal mechanism to share liabilities, which also creates a barrier to collaboration.  Martin Blower added that European countries are looking at BIM, Jim De Waele added the German federation do not support BIM. Martin commented that although this was true, the Europeans could see it coming and he predicted they would overtake us in time. John Chick commented that there is a misconception that you need BIM specialists within the organisation. The current generation of people entering the industry already have the digital skills to adopt it and are waiting for a digital construction methods to be adopted  It was asked what activity the FPS had taken on BIM. The Secretary reported that a small working group had created some guidance notes but had come to the end of their work programme. Focus had now moved to integrating the e-pile schedule into digital construction processes and at the last Technical Committee meeting Neil Chadwick of Atkins had presented on an adapted AGS dataformat for geotechnical data with a view to this being incorporated into BIM models and systems. |  |
| v. | **Freedom of Movement for Workers**  Jim De Waele stated the FPS must maintain pressure to maintain geotechnical contractors on the shortage of skilled workers list. Steve Hadley agreed the FPS need to ensure the people FPS member companies bring over can continue to come over in post-Brexit Britain.  Martin Blower said he had recently attended the APPG event launching the Building on Brexit report, he felt this was a good piece of work but it remained to be seen whether the Government would take any notice of it.  Jim De Waele stated Keller had registered as a Tier 2 employer which enables companies to employ skilled workers from outside the EU. It was anticipated that having geotechnical contractors on the shortage of occupations list will ensure not as much will be required to be paid on the visa levy.  Phil Hines summarised no action is required by the FPS currently, however it is good to be aware of this. |  |
| vi. | **Schedule of Attendance at FPS Meetings**  It was reported at thePlant meeting there are consistent attendees and inconsistent attendees; the Plant group want to increase attendance to gain wider discussions and outcomes. Phil Hines proposed that a list is published of those who are attending FPS meetings generally so the FPS Executive can follow up with companies who do not attend enough meetings and encourage them to become more engaged with the work of the Federation. It was agreed these should be part of the meeting papers for every FPS Quarterly Meeting. | **FPS Secretariat** |
| **4.** | **FPS STRATEGIC PRIORITES 2017** |  |
|  | **Occupational Health**  Steve Hadley reported Occupational Health is on the Build UK agenda. Unfortunately, Build UK have not moved the issue along so the Executive would like the FPS to take a lead. To this end Steve had reviewed everyone’s occupational health policies. The intention is to agree a basic standard and write a position statement that identified the issues that the FPS would like the industry to address in the future such as working hours and mobilisation.  Steve proposed agreeing drug and alcohol limits for Members, which could then be used to inform the standards required from labour agencies. He asked whether the group would be happy to support the national drink-drive blood alcohol limit or would support having the more stringent Network Rail limits.  Phil Hines believed that it was important that you did not have different limits for different people within the organisation, which suggested the standard drink driving limits should apply. Martin Blower commented that safety critical occupations provide a pathway to differentiation that may be useful. There was not a consensus in favour of either national or Network Rail limits.  Yvonne Ainsworth asked why the FPS works to eliminate risk but allows workers to have any alcohol in the bloodstream, as it affects an operatives vision and reaction time. Yvonne stated the limit should be zero and that the FPS should recommend zero alcohol consumption. She related her experience in Sweden, noting machinery operatives are required to blow into a breathalyser to start the machinery, this meant companies have the reassurance the person operating the machinery is sober.  Steve also favoured a more stringent approach but agreed to set the standard at the UK driving limit as most of the Members were supportive of this.  Steve stated in terms of working hours he would review guidance that had been produced both by Bauer and Network Rail to inform what measures the FPS could realistically adopt.  Phil commented the challenge is to get out minimum standards and then to endeavour to improve.  **Commercial Fair Practice**  Phil Hines reported that the Caps on liability paper is to be pushed to Build UK along with the issues on retention and the PQQ process mentioned earlier in the meeting.  **Harm reduction**  See Committee report for Plant Group.  **Technical Standards**  Phil reported that the E-pile schedule was currently being pushed in a bid to regularise the data passed through to contractors.  **Learning and Development**  The intent here is to develop the skills, competence and capacity within the UK workforce, which should reduce the reliance on overseas people.  FPS Secretariat to circulate the FPS Strategic Priorities 2017 with the minutes. | **Steve Hadley**  **FPS Secretariat** |
| **5.** | **QUARTERLY LOAD BEARING STATISTICS** |  |
|  | It was reported the last orders were submitted the day prior to the meeting which caused a delay for circulation. Chris Primett advised the Committee needs to receive meeting papers earlier therefore Phil Hines requested every member endeavour to send their quarterly order statistics in sooner.  The group observed the activity of the market has slowed down and is static at present.  Steve Hadley mentioned Central Piling found it slowed down around the time of the election, but has since found it is starting to pick up. Other members may find this is the case in the next quarter. It was concerning that Associate Members had reported that they were doing more work with non-Members, suggesting that non-Member competitors were taking up a greater share of the market than before.  Ciaran Jennings reminded the Committee to consider these statistics include new members Franki Foundations and Murphy Ground Engineering which will increase the value of current orders when compared to data over a year old. |  |
| **6.** | **FPS EMPLOYMENT STATISTICS** |  |
|  | There was nothing to discuss under this item at present. |  |
| **7.** | **COMMITTEE REPORTS** |  |
| i. | **Executive Committee**  *Many topics were picked up elsewhere on the agenda – see Quarterly Report.*  **Associate Member AGM**:Phil Hines reported that the Executive had met with the Associate Members at the AM AGM. A complaint had been made by PCP that FPS Members were squeezing them on price and not respecting the quality and safety credentials. They strongly felt that the market was slipping backwards in this regard. However, he was grateful that the FPS Members commercial practices were fair in terms of payment terms etc.  The plant manufacturers also raised concerns about the lack of attendance from FPS Members at the Plant meeting. They raised the issue of the FPS request for maintenance manuals/information for their rigs, which is a requirement under EN16228. The AMs are not minded to provide the information in this format owing to the complexity and difficulty of putting something together that is comprehensive, yet usable. They would prefer that we use their maintenance services. Members should be realistic about what they are going to provide to contractors.  **Technical Committee participation**: it is recognised that the group has become very large with some actively inputting into projects and others simply absorbing information, without making a wider contribution. A focused working group and wider technical seminar format are being thought about as a better way to manage the work of the Committee.  **Reinforcement cage supply issues**: Phil reported that he had spoken to Brazil about the issues Members had reported. They are keen for the FPS to provide a standard and to potentially take up Associate Membership. Phil believed that the FPS need to get two suppliers on board with the standard for it take hold in the industry either as Associate Members or straight forward adoption of the standard. Brazil had indicated they would see compliance with the standard as a differentiator in the market for them.  It was suggested that the Commercial Committee could draft some contractual conditions around the supply of rebar. Phil felt it was important to form the standard first and then ask the Commercial Committee to look at it. He committed to contacting the other suppliers in the first instance with a view to presenting the issues and developing a standard.  **Learning & Development**: John Chick has agreed to lead a small working group to set out a strategy for improving skills and progression within the industry via a Learning & Development group. | **P Hines** |
| ii. | **Technical Committee**  **Load cases:** Ciaran Jennings reported that Load Cases are being discussed as Members are finding that too much information is being provided for individual elements. Potentially overdesigned solutions are being provided which adds cost and does not give a good basis for comparison. A small working group are drafting a position paper which will propose standardised terminology and required information and recommend the FPS E-Pile Schedule. The intention is also to see if the E-Pile Schedule can be integrated into structural engineering software so that it can be a button press output.  **Sonic vs TIP testing:** A small working group has been set up to compare sonic testing and thermal integrity profile testing, they will produce an FPS Guidance document to cover the positives and negatives of Sonic and TIP testing. An initial draft is currently being produced. The Secretary commented that this comparative approach was being taken partly in response to ESG’s feedback that there are significant issues with switching to TIP testing and dropping Sonic Logging altogether.  Yvonne Ainsworth commented one of the common problems encountered with TIP testing is with the interpretation of results, many assumptions go into these causing inconsistency – such as assuming the temperature in the ground is uniform. She stated that a very experienced academic would need to feed into the project in order to address the interpretation issue, whereas sonic testing is better understood.  John Chick noted with Sonic testing the operatives are at risk of finger loss and facial injury and that this is the primary driver for the comparison exercise. He felt that the safety issue should be the primary driver for the Federation’s position.  Jim De Waele asked whether the FPS should recommend not using sonic tubes. Phil Hines felt that the technical validity was not proven yet. Yvonne advised the Committee that she is aware BBGE have a hand-free Sonic testing which is a safe solution and other solutions on the market to address the cage splicing issues. Jim suggested the FPS get hold of the BBGE solution. FPS Secretariat to circulate best practice methods.  **EC7 Funding:** It was also updated that the FPS has agreed to partially fund Andrew Bond’s expenses towards his involvement on EC7. | **Y Ainsworth/ FPS Secretariat** |
| iii. | **Commercial Committee**  The Commercial Committee is in the process of producing a Fair Certification position paper that sets out the issues and remedies, however it was acknowledged it is a difficult problem and remains a difficult topic as fundamentally there is no commercial imperative for the client to pay on time. Resolutions for the issue were discussed; the group remains ambivalent but will progress with a position.  The agenda topics for the group were looked at to determine what continues to have value to the Committee and what new issues should be introduced. It was agreed that there should be a focus on bringing in people to the Committee from different disciplines, e.g. quantity surveyors, procurement etc to widen the input and understanding into the issues.  The Committee members have pledged to bring along a junior colleague to the next meeting; someone who would not normally get access to the level of commercial discussion that takes place. Two guests were welcomed at the last meeting. The intention is to widen participation in the group and seek out new perspectives on issues and to transfer knowledge. They will be asked to comment on the future direction of the industry, provide ideas on how they would like the industry to change and ask questions that they would like answers to. |  |
| iv. | **Safety and Training Committee**  Phil Hines reported the Safety and Training Committee are doing more analysis on the Accident Statistics with a view to establishing trends. The group are interested to see if there is a correlation between age and frequency of accidents and whether there is a pattern in shift times. Phil advised at the next Quarterly Committee meeting they will be able circulate a better interpretation of this information.  Chris Primett added Aarsleff seem to have more injuries in the factories than on site, however it is noted the injuries reported are more minor. Chris agreed a detailed analysis of the statistics will provide some interesting insight. |  |
| v. | **Plant Safety Group**  Phil Hines stated the intention of the Plant Safety Group is to clarify the Group’s goals and will take ‘safety’ out of its title so that this is not deemed to be the primary focus of the group.  Phil reported discussions were held on what the requirements are on manufacturers to provide information on the safe replacement and maintenance of components on rigs. It was agreed that Keith Bolton will extract key points of the EN16228 guidance so that manufacturers can respond to them and speak to their representatives on CEN/TC 151 WG3.  **Manual Handling Statement:** A small working group led by Keith Bolton have proposed a statement regarding the intent for removing manual operations for handing augers, rods and other operations. It was reported there has been sharing of methodology on the use of auger catchers.  Phil Hines presented a proposed policy statement that would commit Members to removing manual handling operations wherever possible on site for augers and rod handling. Jim De Waele proposed that the statement should be amended to change the word ‘practicable’ to ‘reasonably practicable’ in order to provide some legal protection to contractors, this was agreed.    It was agreed the FPS Secretariat should circulate the statement with a deadline for comment or approval. It was also requested that all share their automation processes and ideas so that a paper can be produced to help Members to change to a predominantly automated approach to these types operation.  Phil also reported the Chair of the Plant Group was stepping down owing to his role change within Cementation. A new Chair had been recommended by Alasdair Henderson from within BAM Ritchies. He shall meet with Steve Joynson and Andrew Egglesdon with a view to introducing him to the group and taking its work forward. | **FPS Secretariat**  **MDs** |
| **8.** | **MEMBERSHIP MATTERS** |  |
| i. | **Membership Audit**  Ciaran Jennings reminded the group the FPS Audit is due to start next year, he advised if the FPS wants to introduce new additions or change it, it will need to be discussed soon.  Jim De Waele asked if another auditor is required; it was noted John Patch has retired from RBL but is happy to take on this role. Ciaran advised another auditor will need to be sourced. |  |
| ii. | **Membership & Associate Membership**  It was advised that the proposed changes to the Associate Membership Scheme rules are adopted into the rules of the Association. Ciaran Jennings explained the proposed changes were circulated with meeting papers and strengthened the governance around vetting potential AMs. He added it would allow new associate members to be recommended from the working group committees, it would then be considered by the Quarterly Committee.  **The Resolution to change the Rules of Association to incorporate the changes was proposed by Martin Blower and seconded by Chris Primett. The Resolution was unanimously approved by the Quarterly Committee.**  . |  |
|  | **PR AND DIGITAL MARKETING** |  |
| i. | **FPS Website**  Ciaran Jennings presented the redesign of the FPS Website; he showed the new features to the website. It is ready to launch subject to a few tweaks, Ciaran asked the Committee to agree to push the website live.  It was advised the site will adapt its view to a mobile device, it can be condensed to tablet or smart phone size.  On the home page, there is a looped video visual for a more interactive view for visitors. Ciaran asked for video content to be sent in and also any job opportunities that Members wished to feature on the site, especially those for Apprentices.  Steve Hadley commented it will be easier to upload so if members have content they should send it across to the FPS Secretary. Content changes will generally incur no cost unlike the current website, however videos will incur a cost owing for the need to edit them.  The new logo presented on the website will be used across all FPS media.  FPS Secretariat agreed to circulate a staging link for members to check before launch. | **FPS Secretariat** |
|  | **New logo to accompany website**  The new logo was presented to the Committee along the format of the new letterhead stationary. The Committee had no objections or comment. |  |
| **10.** | **FPS MSc STUDENT PRIZE** |  |
|  | Ciaran Jennings reported on the MSc student prize; he relayed there are now two candidates whose details have been circulated. The locality of the candidate is important to consider when placing them on a project and they will be invited to the FPS Annual Dinner so that they can network amongst FPS members. The FPS Secretariat circulated their CVs for members to offer placements, these will be re-circulated.  Jim De Waele noted there has been an underwhelming impression by members, he added if there is no interest Keller will take one candidate. It was noted Alasdair Henderson has advised BAM Ritchies may potentially take another. | **FPS Secretariat** |
| **11.** | **REPORTS AS NECESSARY** |  |
| i. | **Build UK**  It was previously reported that Build UK have contacted the FPS regarding the CITB status vote; the FPS wants CITB to remain in existence. FPS Secretariat has received the link now therefore agreed to send request to membership next week; responses are required by September. | **FPS Secretariat** |
| ii. | **EFFC**  Martin Blower reported there is an ongoing conflict between a rival mining standard and the new rig standard over the issue of guarding. However, this was proving a difficult issue to resolve as there was not consensus among EFFC Members on the requirements for guards.  He also advised the EFFC is focusing on similar issues to the FPS such as, health and safety, platforms and rig driver standards.  The EFFC are trying to achieve mutually recognising rig driver qualifications. Belgium and the Netherlands have nearly finished recognising each other’s syllabuses whilst the Swiss and German standards are similar. At the recent Contracts meeting in Paris it was suggested to contact national authorities of each country to sit down and review standards, finding commonalities with an aim of producing a minimum standard document for each country.  Martin also reported the EFFC are looking at the Working Platform certification based on the UK model. Chris Primett added the main contractors abroad are prone to resist this as they do not have a powerful HSE body enforcing action and prosecuting management..    The EFFC AGM will take place in October, in Madrid. |  |
| iii. | **Ground Forum**  Steve Hadley reported the Ground Forum discussed auditing of drilling crews, there was a suggestion that piling crews should be audited. Steve explained it is different for BDA as their drillers are mostly self-employed where piling operatives mostly have an employer. This suggestion is being resisted.  It was also reported the degree apprenticeship was further discussed; there are a few that exist already, however there is one on Engineering Geology and Geotechnics that is being put together and led by Portsmouth university. They intend to create a day release training basis, with on job training and after 3 years the candidates would receive a degree equivalent to a Masters degree. It would be funded by a levy. The idea is the candidates would be studying on a condensed programme in order to fit the usual 4 year degree programme into three years. |  |
| **12.** | **SOCIAL EVENTS** |  |
| i. | **Golf day 2017**  The FPS Secretariat reported the Golf day will be taking place on the 13th September at The Nottinghamshire. |  |
| ii. | **Annual Awards Dinner 2017**  The FPS Secretariat reported the Annual Dinner for 2017 will be taking place on the 20th October 2017 after the FPS Quarterly Meeting; it will be held at the Sheraton Hotel. It was added the Awards pack will be issued to members next week. |  |
| **13.** | **ANY OTHER BUSINESS** |  |
|  | **Safety Alerts**  Steve Hadley asked if Safety Alerts are still being circulated; the FPS Secretariat advised they are being circulated as and when received. FPS Secretariat to check Steve is on the correct email distribution list. | **FPS Secretariat** |
| **14.** | **DATES OF 2017 MEETINGS** |  |
|  | Next meeting dates are as follows:  20th October 2017 held at Hamilton House \*New Date\* |  |