

Minutes of the meeting of

Fife Chamber of Safety

Held on 12th March 2007 at the

**Dunfermline Building Society, Caledonia House
Carnegie Avenue, Dunfermline**

Present

Sheena Johnston	FMC Technologies
John Johnston	FMC Technologies
Martin Brown	ARCO
Ian Norton	North British Distillery
Mark Russell	Dunfermline B Soc
Tom Heath	Self
John O'Rourke	Queen Margaret University
David Cant	Lauder College
David Birrell	Fife Council
Cathy Welch	Fife Council
Annemarie Smith	Fife NHS
Tom Canning	Babcock B.E.S.
David Jones	Velux
William Miller	Self
Ivie Callison	Scottish Motor Auction Group
Andy Fowler	AF Associates
Ian McGlashan	Concrete Products
Bob Crewes	Exxon Mobile Chemical
Eric Priesman	Phoenix
Alistair Andrew	FETA
Sally Eddington	ADM Milling

Apologies

Apologies were received from Richard Wilson, Andy McKay, Andy Martin, Colin Sparling, Billy McLaughlin and Alan Harwood.

Chairman's Opening Remarks

In the absence of Alan Harwood, Mark Russell chaired the meeting, he started by introducing Anne Marie Smith, Tom Canning, David Jones and William Miller. Welcoming them along to their first meeting with the Chamber.

MR went on to introduce the evenings speaker, Mr Alistair Andrew of the Forth Estuary Transport Authority (FETA).

Presentation

Alistair started by introducing himself and giving a potted history of the Forth Road Bridge. The bridge was opened in 1964, it is the fourth largest suspension bridge in the world.

Alistair talked about the increasing volumes of traffic using the bridge, which is much higher than the national average of 30,000 per day on a 24 foot road. This has led to an increase in load on the bridge, the original design load for the bridge was 2,800tonnes but the weigh bridge at the North end of the bridge regularly records a physical weight of around 5,600tonnes.

Alistair talked about the special mastic asphalt used on the road surface of the bridge and the physical and climatic problems associated with laying this. The asphalt is laid an inch and a half thick, it is hand finished and bonded to a chemical base on the steel plate which cures at a minimum temperature of 10 degrees C.

The Contractors laying the surface work a 58hour continuous shift from 2100hrs on Friday nigh till 0400hrs on the Monday morning at which point the bridge must be handed back with the restrictions lifted, otherwise the contractor faces huge penalties.

Alistair talked about the construction of the bridge, the main cable can take 14,000 tonnes of load. It is made up of 11,608 individual cables that are bound together and rapped in a linseed and lead before being sealed and painted.

Recent studies have shown that the cables are corroding, the galvanising system is breaking down, the cables are going brittle and snapping. The study has highlighted a 4 stages in the corrosion process, in some areas this has shown a 37% drop in the strength of the main cable.

The bridge has been given an anticipated safe life until 2014, at which point the safety factor will be 2 (in 1968 it was 2.5). At this point it may be that cars and light vehicles only will be allowed across the bridge, HGV's will be routed via Kincardine.

In 2005 Acoustic monitoring was started on the bridge, a Canadian company who specialise in this field were employed to mount 7 microphones on each main cable. These are monitored continually, since this monitoring started a total of 3 strands of the cable have been recorded breaking.

Alistair talked about some of the strategies to prolong the life of the bridge, a company from Japan is being brought in to try a de-humidification system on the main cables, if the humidity in the cables can be brought below 40% then the corrosion process could be slowed or stopped.

Alistair also talked about the proposed new crossing, discussing the various options that had been put forward, 9 in total. He covered their merits and cost and explained why most had been ruled out. He talked about the tunnel options and explained why these were not economically viable.

MR thanked Alistair for an extremely interesting presentation, one which everyone had enjoyed. MR opened the floor for questions. A question was asked about the condition of the Golden Gate Bridge in America, it was highlighted that it was a longer span than the Forth Road Bridge and a number of years older, why did it not suffer from the same problems that the Forth Road Bridge has?

Alistair's reply was that it will suffer from the same problems, they just haven't looked yet. A 24million Dollar contract is due to start next year analysing the main ropes on the Golden Gate Bridge, he commented that a lot of the technologies and systems that were developed for the maintenance of the Forth Road Bridge will be reused as they are considered to be best practice. FETA is at the forefront of this technology and it is internationally recognised that they are pioneering new technologies.

A number of other questions were asked and a general discussion ensued.

MR closed the presentation and again thanked Alistair Andrew for his presentation. Cathy Welsh presented Alistair with a small token from the panel.

A copy of Alistair's presentation is attached.

Minutes of the Last Meeting

The minutes of the last meeting dated 12th February 2007 were approved.

SCOS Conference

MR highlighted the forthcoming SCOS Conference at Dunblane Hilton Hydro Hotel on 4th April 2007, he encouraged as many people as possible to attend. He also encouraged entries into the SCOS awards, Fife Chamber traditionally has done extremely well in these awards, it would be good to keep this tradition going.

Fife Chamber Executive Committee Meeting

MR mentioned that the next executive committee meeting was going to be on 19th March 2007 at 7.30pm in the DBS.

MR Highlighted the subject of Re-branding – The membership was asked to consider changing the name of the panel, it was considered that “Fife Chamber of Safety” was somewhat dated and may put people off joining because of its perceived stuffiness. Suggestions were made to re-brand in line with Safety Groups UK to become Safety Group Fife or Fife Safety Group. Consideration was also given to adding “ Environmental “ into the title.

Please send your suggestions to Mark Russell.

Feedback was given on the recent site visit to Mines Rescue in Crossgates, all who attended gave a glowing report of the visit, and felt it appropriate that Errol Parish and his team were officially thanked for their time and enthusiasm.

With no other business raised from the floor MR closed the meeting and thanked everyone for their attendance

Date and Time of Next Meeting

The next meeting of the Chamber will be at 7.30pm on Monday 16th April at the Dunfermline Building Society. The speaker for the evening will be Ms Anna Graham of the Business Environment Partnership (BEP) talking about Environmental issues.

Mark Russell
Secretary
Fife Chamber of Safety