



Approach to New Planting

Introduction

Trees and woodlands occupy about 14% of the area of Wales compared with the European Union average of 32%. They provide a range of benefits to society, which can be increased through appropriate expansion. New woodlands can provide a valuable timber resource, link and protect the remnants of our ancient and semi-natural woodlands, provide shelter on farms and help diversify agricultural businesses.

New woodlands also make a valuable contribution to the restoration of the landscapes left derelict by mineral extraction or other past industrial activities, re-establishing the links with surrounding natural habitats. New woodlands and trees also bring benefits in urban areas and on the urban fringe by providing opportunities for access to the countryside; helping to maintain air quality and creating a landscape setting for homes, commerce and industry.

Definitions

The **UK Woodland Assurance Standard** (UKWAS) is an independent certification standard for verifying sustainable forest and woodland management in the United Kingdom. Woodland owners can achieve certification for their woodlands if they gain independent verification that they are complying with the Standard.

The **UK Forest Standard** (UKFS) outlines the UK Government's approach to sustainable forestry.

Woodland Habitat Networks refers to the strategic expansion and restoration of woodland habitats in order to address the impact of fragmentation and habitat isolation. Networks are split into two distinct zones; Core networks and Focal networks:

- **Core networks** are created around Ancient Semi-Natural Woodlands. These are often the centre of a wider Focal network.
- **Focal networks** are areas that surround Core network areas.

Native Woodlands are those woods comprised mainly of locally native trees and shrubs.



Approach to New Planting

Land eligible for Woodland Expansion Grants must have less than 20% existing tree cover.

Habitat Land is equivalent to uncultivated and semi-natural land as defined in the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) regulations 2002 (an extract from this can be found at the end of this document).

BWW Approach to New Planting

Better Woodlands for Wales (BWW) encourages landowners and managers to take opportunities for appropriate woodland expansion. Woodland expansion grants focus on agriculturally improved and arable land, comparable non-agricultural land and brownfield sites, although other site types may be acceptable. The BWW Management Plan will consider wider land management considerations; Forestry Commission Wales (FCW) will ensure that new woodlands are appropriate to the site conditions and surrounding area. Four different woodland types are eligible for grant aid: these are described in Table 1 below.

FCW and the Countryside Council for Wales (CCW) have identified areas where woodland expansion is particularly desirable in order to consolidate existing habitats and develop links between them. Core Networks usually contain existing native woodland and other unimproved Habitat Land. Surrounding these are the Focal Networks where woodland expansion is desirable. FCW provides additional grant for planting woodlands in these areas.

The minimum total New Planting area qualifying for BWW is 0.25 hectares (ha) which can comprise smaller blocks, but individual planting areas must not be smaller than 0.1ha, or less than 12metres (m) in width at the narrowest part. (Width means the distance between the tree stems, not canopy width.) The area planted must remain free from livestock for 10 years following the payment of first instalment of grant aid.

Appropriate areas of open ground within new planting schemes are acceptable where they support biodiversity and increase woodland amenity value. In most circumstances no more than 20% of the total new planting area should be open ground.

Small areas of unmappable, open, and unplantable ground can be included within the planted areas up to an area of 15%: this does not reduce the grant amount. Larger areas (i.e. greater than 0.1ha) should be mapped separately and identified as open ground areas. FCW do not pay planting grant for these, but they may be eligible for additional contributions such as Focal Networks and Improved Land Premium (ILP). Additionally, these areas would be eligible for Woodland Improvement Grants (WIG) to assist with vegetation management. However, in some cases (e.g. small woodlands

Approach to New Planting

surrounded by open ground), the Woodland Officer (WO) may refuse the inclusion of open space other than for management purposes (such as a road or ride).

Possible impacts from Deer are to be considered in all applications and where necessary, a Deer Management Assessment is carried out. (See 'BWW Approach to Deer Management' for details.) This is undertaken by the Wales Deer Initiative and paid for by FCW. Recommended actions may be funded through Woodland Improvement Grants ¹. Applicants are expected to work with local deer management groups where they exist.

The increased cost of establishing trees on brownfield sites or disturbed land is recognised within BWW. New planting on these sites is eligible for WIG as well as the standard tariff grant for designated operations. These are assessed via the WIG calculator (see 'BWW How to use the Woodland Improvement Grant (WIG) calculator' for details).

Work to control noxious weeds prior to planting can be funded through WIG payments, however if the area is not subsequently planted, then the WIG payment may be reclaimed.

Operations relating to public access ² are eligible for Woodland Improvement Grants. Grant aid will be available at 50 - 75% in line with the rules for existing woodlands.

All Woodland Improvement Grants and New Planting grants are available at the discretion of FCW. Please note that FCW has limited funds available for grant aid, and treats the management of existing woodlands as a priority. In the event of funding shortages in a particular financial year, the available grant budget may be allocated to works in existing woodlands. This would mean that planting scheme proposals arriving late in the financial year may be offered an alternative claim year.

Planning Process

New Planting grant applications must be made through the BWW management plan process. As with all BWW applications, the plan must be prepared by an approved management planner, using the Grants and Licences Online Service (GLOS). Information about the scheme and a list of approved management planners are available from the FCW website; paper copies of these documents can be provided.

BWW is a "whole wood" scheme: this means that all of a landowner's woodland should be included in the management plan, including parts where no operations are envisaged. In the case of New Planting, the proposed planting area should be shown on the management plan Initial Application map (prepared by the management planner); they

¹ E.g. High seats, vegetation management etc

² E.g. Footpaths, signs, benches, seats etc

Approach to New Planting

are also expected to include any existing woodland under the same ownership. Management planners can advise landowners on how the scheme can help with the management of existing woodlands.

As part of the management planning process, the planner should ensure that New Planting areas are:

- Mapped as part of the Initial Application;
- Identified as an "Issue" in the Foundation Plan;
- Shown as a "Feature" in the Management Plan;
- Identified on the management plan maps as one or more subcompartment(s);
- Shown as at least one operation in the Management Plan (against which grant can be claimed).

The normal BWW consultation procedures must be followed; where a consultee organisation (e.g. CCW or Cadw) offers advice, the management planner is expected to incorporate this into the management plan. Further information is available in the document AT11: Approach to Consultation and Information Sharing.

There are some mapping requirements in BWW which are specific to New Planting. In common with all BWW schemes, maps are prepared (by the management planner) as part of the application. This can be done with paper maps or digitally (see the documents AT18 & 19, Approach to Paper / Digital Mapping for more information).

Where the New Planting involves splitting an existing field, the new boundaries **must be physically marked** on the site at the application stage. This marking should be permanent, and would generally require posts to be put in place. The new boundary should be surveyed accurately for mapping purposes, preferably by means of a Global Positioning System (GPS) used by a trained operator.

On receipt by FCW, Maps showing New Planting areas are compared with the existing Rural Land Register field data; this information is shared with the Welsh Assembly Government (WAG) as part of cross-checking procedures. The information supplied by management planners is used to permanently alter field boundaries on Integrated Administration and Control System (IACS) records.

Permanent marking and accurate mapping of the New Planting boundary is essential because any difference between the planned and actual areas found during subsequent farm inspections could result in grant recovery action by WAG.

Approach to New Planting

BWW Grants for New Planting

Grants for New Planting are **two-instalment** tariff grants, contributing to both the initial establishment of the crop and its subsequent management up to year 5:

- The first instalment is **70%** of the basic tariff rate, and is paid on completion of satisfactory planting of the area as shown in the BWW management plan;
- The second instalment (30%) is normally paid **four years** later. To qualify for this payment, the area must be fully stocked and established, to the extent that it is out of danger from weed competition and pest damage. (If the crop is deemed to be fully established earlier, claims for the second instalment will be accepted from year three.)

Land planted under BWW may be **eligible for Single Payment Scheme**. You may use land taken out of production, i.e. new ILP planting on **agricultural** land, to support claims on your SPS entitlements **provided** that you used the land to claim SPS in 2008. This land may be used for SPS claims while ILP is claimed on the area.

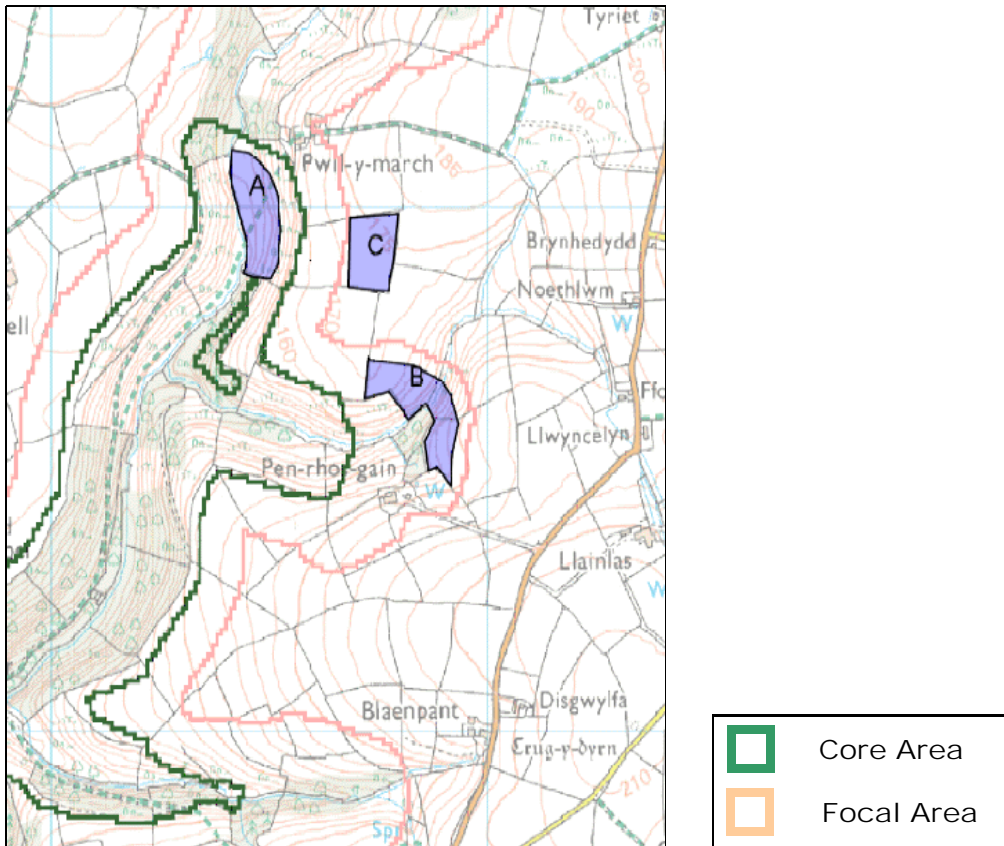
In addition to the standard tariff grant, various 'Additional Contributions' may be available depending on the woodland type being planted and the location of the site.

- **Fencing** – All new planting sites are eligible for fencing grants. These are costed using the WIG Cost Calculator (available via the FCW website) and paid through the Woodland Improvement Grants in BWW.
- **Local Provenance Planting Stock** – An additional payment is available where suitable local provenance planting stock is being used. Evidence from the supplier must be provided, normally in the form of a 'Certificate of Local Provenance' (See Table 2, below, for qualifying planting types).
- **Core and Focal Area Networks** – New plantings that fall within the core and focal areas, as shown on the 'Land Information Search' (LIS) system may be eligible for an Additional Contribution (see Table 2). Qualifying plantings only need to touch the boundary of the mapped network area in order to be eligible for these payments. In the example below (Diagram 1), Woodland A would qualify for 'Core and Focal' payments, Woodlands B and C would both be eligible for Focal payment. (Areas that fall entirely outside of the networks will not be eligible for the payments regardless of how close to the networks they are).

All Additional Contributions are paid in full with the first planting grant instalment.

Approach to New Planting

Diagram 1



(c) Crown Copyright. All rights reserved Forestry Commission PGA No: 100025498 2008

Natural Regeneration

Natural Regeneration (NR) is the establishment of woodland from seed distributed naturally from trees on or near the site without human intervention.

Natural Regeneration is an acceptable means of establishing woodlands in BWW, on sites where the method is considered desirable, and it is feasible to achieve the required stocking density. This allows for greater flexibility in managing the environmental gains on sensitive sites. The required stocking levels for NR are usually the same as those for planting (see Table 2 below).

No New Planting Grant is paid for NR as no planting costs are incurred; however Woodland Improvement Grants are available as a contribution to the cost of preparing the site and securing NR. In the event of regeneration failing to become established, FCW would not expect the WIG to be repaid, providing all the designated work has been undertaken. In this situation the area would become eligible for planting tariff grants

Approach to New Planting

again. This would be via an amendment to the BWW case and must have the agreement of the case Woodland Officer.

In some situations a combination of NR and planting is appropriate, in which case New Planting grants are paid for the planted element on a pro rata basis.

Woodland expansion through Natural Regeneration is eligible for Core and Focal Area Payments within the designated areas. These are payable when the land is taken out of Agriculture in line with Improved Land Premium qualifying period (see below).

Improved Land Premium

Improved Land Premium (ILP) is the successor to the 'Farm Woodland Premium Scheme'. It is an **annual payment for ten years**, which aims to compensate landowners for income foregone through the change of land use from agriculture to woodland.

Woodlands on which ILP is claimed must not be felled (or have the trees otherwise removed) for ten years following the first payment. (This does not include respacing or silvicultural thinning operations, which are permissible).

ILP is only paid for new planting on agricultural land designated as either arable Land or as 'Agriculturally Improved Grassland'³.

Improved grassland is defined in the Environmental Impact Assessment (Uncultivated Land and Semi-Natural Areas) (Wales) Regulations 2002 as being grassland comprising of a mixture of at least 25 – 30 % rye grass and/or white clover. Other species of sown grass will also be accepted.

The Phase 1 data maps produced by CCW are normally used to determine the status of grassland, however definitions agreed under Tir Gofal or Organic schemes will be used where they apply.

If an applicant chooses to have a full habitat survey of the site carried out by a qualified person at their own expense, FCW will accept the results of such a survey.

³ In accordance with the requirement of Article 31(1) of Regulation (EC) No 1974/2006. 'Agricultural land' is specified as land used for horticulture, fruit growing, arable cropping, seed growing, dairy farming, livestock breeding and keeping, the use of the land as grazing land, meadowland, osier land, market gardens and nursery grounds or the use of land as woodland where that use is ancillary to the use of the land for other agricultural activities. Letting land to another person to carry out an agricultural activity, where the applicant retains some responsibility for the management of the land, for example letting land on a grazing licence or short term tenancy for grazing is also considered an agricultural activity.

Approach to New Planting

There are two set levels of ILP payments; one for 'Farmers' and a second for 'Non-Farmers' ⁴.

ILP is not payable on land entered into the set aside scheme, as landowners are able to continue claiming set aside payments.

In cases where expansion is achieved through natural regeneration, ILP becomes payable from the date the land is removed from agriculture and the initial work to encourage NR is undertaken. In some cases this involves simply fencing the area or removing grazing pressure.

ILP is payable on all the land within the woodland expansion area, whether planted, regenerated or designated as open ground. The minimum area for ILP is the same as that for New Planting in BWW, i.e. 0.25ha.

ILP claims are administered by the Welsh Assembly Government; however the application is completed by the management planner as part of the BWW New Planting application. Claims must be made via the Single Application Form (SAF), which must be submitted annually by the applicant to WAG.

ILP is payable from the point at which the payment of the first instalment of New Planting Grant is authorised (or the area is fenced for NR and is therefore out of agricultural production). Claims must be made on the SAF in May; payment is made when all the checks and inspections are completed. Unclaimed ILP will be lost – missed claims for previous years cannot be claimed back.

Table 1: BWW New Planting Types

Woodland Category	Specification
Standard	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No species restriction at a sub cpt level providing, they are suited to site and woodland meets UKWAS and environmental standards. Stocking density 2500/ha for full grant, pro-rata rates for lower stocking densities
Simple Mixture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Minimum of 3 species with no more than 75% of any one species. Minimum of 25% broadleaves. Maximum of 10% woody shrub element Broadleaves must be planted in a way to ensure survival. Stocking density 2500/ha for full grant, pro-rata rates for lower stocking densities.
Quality Mixture New woodlands with potential to grow	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Limited to less exposed sites and \ or those with good rooting potential (site score of 3 or less) Minimum of 5 major species (at least 10% of each)

⁴ The definition of a farmer remains in accordance with the requirements of Article 31(3) of regulation (EC) No 1974/2006. A farmer is defined as meaning a person who devotes as essential part of their working time to agricultural activities and who derives at least 25% of their gross income from farming, taking into account all of the land that they farm in Wales. Applicants are required to provide written evidence from a Chartered Accountant confirming the level of income is above the minimum threshold.

Approach to New Planting

Woodland Category	Specification
quality timber in mixtures that have scope for later transformation to CCF	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minimum of 25% broadleaves. • Maximum of 10% woody shrub element • No more than 50% of a single species. • Stocking density 2500/ha
Native Woodland	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Site native species, planted in communities corresponding to Habitat Action Plan native woodland types. • Suitable local provenance planting stock • Maximum of 20% woody shrubs allowed • Clumped distribution of species with variable spacing • Stocking density 1600\ha, pro-rata rates for lower stocking density

Note: When planting mixtures, the broad-leaved component must be planted in such a way as to ensure it survival in the mature canopy.

Table 2: BWW New Planting Tariff and Additional Contribution Rates

Planting Type	Planting Grant (£/ha)	Local, Native Planting Stock (£/ha)	Top 20 Focal Networks (£/ha)	Core Networks (£/ha)
Native Woodland Site native species, planted in communities corresponding to Habitat Action Plan native woodland types (1600 stems/ha)	1800	150	475	475
Standard Crops Any appropriate species (2500 stems/ha)	1000	150	0	0
Simple Mixtures Minimum of 25% broadleaves. At least three main species in the mixture (2500 stems/ha)	1200	150	250	0
Quality Mixtures Crops on sites with greater potential to grow quality timber in mixtures that provide some scope for later transformation to Continuous Cover Forestry. Minimum of five species in the mix with no less than 25% broadleaves (2500 stems/ha)	1700	150	250	250

Table 3: Improved Land Premium Rates

Land Type	Farmer	Non-farmer
Arable and Agriculturally Improved land	£250 / ha / yr	£100 / ha /yr
Habitat land	Ineligible	Ineligible

Approach to New Planting

Table 4: Habitat Land definition

Extract from EIA Uncultivated Land and Semi-Natural Areas Wales Regulations 2002:

"The Regulations do not define 'uncultivated land and semi-natural areas' but, as a working guide, the intention is to apply the EIA arrangements for the following types of land ('Land' here means a field or management unit, or part of it, where you can easily see the difference between improved and unimproved land.):

Land Type	Land Typically Included	Tests To Determine
<i>Unimproved Grassland, Heath and Moorland</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Meadows and grazing pastures.</i> • <i>Downland or other open or enclosed upland grassland.</i> • <i>Grassland with some tree cover (such as orchards, parkland and wood pasture).</i> • <i>Lowland and coastal heathland (including dry and wet heath).</i> • <i>Moorland (including bog) and upland rough grazing (including intake).</i> 	<p><i>Land would be considered uncultivated if it had less than 25% – 30% of ryegrass (Lolium species) and/or white clover (Trifolium repens), or other sown grass species indicative of cultivation.</i></p> <p><i>Where there are difficulties in determining whether the land is uncultivated using the above test, you should ask us for advice. In making our decision, we will take into account previous agricultural operations on the land over the last 15 years, including ploughing, re-seeding and draining."</i></p>

Further Information

- The Environmental Impact Assessment (Uncultivated Land and Semi-Natural Areas) (Wales) Regulations 2002
- BWW GSI guidance for Management Planners: MapInfo™; ArcView™; Map Maker™
- UKWAS standard
- The UK Forest Standard
- BWW Grant Structure
- BWW A Guide for Woodland Owners
- BWW Approach to Deer Management
- BWW Approach to PAWS
- BWW Approach to Woodland Improvement Grants
- BWW How to use the Woodland Improvement Grant (WIG) calculator
- Tree Establishment on Landfill Sites (Forest Research)
- Reclaiming Disturbed Land for Forestry (Bulletin 110 Forest Research)
- FC Practice Guide: The restoration of PAWS

Approach to New Planting

- Woodland Trust Guide: The conservation and restoration of PAWS