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WOODLANDS
FOR WALES

OWNERS NEWSLETTER

Issue 1 – July 2007

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Welcome

I'm pleased to welcome you to the first edition of the Better Woodlands for Wales (BWW) Owners Newsletter, the Forestry Commission Wales (FCW) publication aimed at owners, agents and woodland managers in Wales who are interested in the new BWW scheme. The newsletter will be produced twice yearly and will allow us to tell you what is happening with BWW. We also welcome feedback and in future editions will be happy to include articles on the issues that you think are important.

Update on BWW

BWW was launched during April 2006 with the first management plan approved in July of that year.

Take-up of the scheme was steady for the first 12-months; the old Woodland Grant Scheme (WGS) remained open to applications until the end of 2006 and the industry concentrated on finishing WGS applications that were in the pipeline and implementing restocking and new planting schemes during the 2006-2007 planting season. With this business finished the industry has increasingly turned its focus to BWW during 2007 and there are now 543 applications with 110 management plans currently being prepared and 37 have been approved. Around 3 to 5 plans are being approved each week and this figure may rise as the industry begins to focus on getting schemes approved in time for the 2007-2008 planting season.

BWW applications now cover around 20,000 hectares (ha) of woodland! This relates to 2-years applications for the old WGS scheme. The task for 2007-2008 is to turn applications into completed management plans.

Green light to issue BWW!

There has been a delay in issuing contracts for completed BWW plans but the Assembly have now given us permission to go ahead. The reason for the delay was that BWW is part of the 2007-2013 Rural Development Plan (RDP) and this has only recently been submitted to the European Union (EU) for approval. Rather than wait for approval from the EU, the new assembly government has decided that agricultural and forestry schemes included within the RDP should proceed.



Customer Reference Numbers (CRN's) are required in order for us to approve your BWW Management Plan



We will issue draft contracts to owners with completed management plans in August. Our aim is to have 10,000ha of woodlands in approved BWW contracts by the end of March 2008.

Forestry Commission Wales launch BWW woodland creation grants

The new planting grants for BWW will be launched at the Royal Welsh Show on Tuesday 24th July. The grants are structured in similar categories to the replanting grants but provide some additional payments for creating woodlands in locations that contribute to the development of habitat networks. The cost of fencing is also grant aided separately from the area based planting grants. Finally, for new woodlands planted on more productive agricultural land, an annual payment will be available for 10 years from the Welsh Assembly Government. The grant rates and criteria for the Improved Land Premium are different the Farm Woodland Premium Scheme and will be more attractive to many farmers.

The details of the new planting grants are set out in the new BWW grant guide. A document comparing the new grants with the old ones is also available on the FC Wales Website. To access the new planting grants you go through the same planning process as for existing woodlands.

If you want to plant this winter under BWW you need to start planning soon so that we can issue contracts soon after the grant application screens for the new planting grants are made available in October.

Changes to grant administration

Due to the implementation of new rules governing the 2007-2013 Rural Development Plan for Wales some administrative changes have taken place.

In order to minimise the impact for the forestry sector FCW has been working with the Rural Payments Division of the Welsh Assembly Government.

The first of these changes is the requirement for all grant beneficiaries to have a unique Customer Reference Number or CRN. Each CRN will be linked to a set of payee details to which all grant payments will be directed.

If you are a farmer receiving the Single Farm Payment or if you take part in an agri-environment scheme, such as Tir Gôfal, you will already have a CRN. (The number starts with the letter A and is followed by seven digits: e.g. A0044267)

If you already have a CRN, please send it to us so that we can link it to your BWW application. Once your BWW application is approved, grants will be paid to the payee specified when you registered for the CRN.

If you do not have a CRN you will need to register for one before we are able to approve your BWW Management Plan and issue you with a grant contract. To register you will need to contact your local Welsh Assembly divisional office to request a copy of the relevant forms – details of which are below. The Forestry Commission cannot undertake registration on your behalf.



**BWW
G&L Online
can be
accessed
via**

www.eforestry.gov.uk



Government Buildings Penrallt CAERNARFON Gwynedd LL55 1EP Tel. 01286 674 144	Government Buildings Spa Road East LLANDRINDOD WELLS Powys LD1 5HA Tel.01597 823 777	Government Buildings Picton Terrace CARMARTHEN Carmarthenshire SA31 3BT Tel. 01267 225 300
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Online service from Grants and Licences (G&L)

FCW are encouraging woodland owners and managers to take full advantage of Forestry Commission Wales's Grants and Licences Online Service - G&L Online. G&L Online is the computer system which administers the BWW grant scheme.

Designed with the user very much in mind, there are many facets to the system that will benefit both agents and landowners alike and allow them to manage their BWW contract more easily once approved.

The route to registration is via our web site and upon the completion of a simple, one off, registration process an e-mail will be sent to you confirming a username and password which will enable successful login in to the system at any time that is convenient.

The major features of this service are that the owner or agent will be able to follow the progress of the management plan online while it is being prepared. Once the plan is approved they will be able to request amendments, manage their plan including running reports and make claims online.

To register you can access the Forestry Commission Wales web site using the link www.eforestry.gov.uk

Alternatively you can enter the Wales [Grants & Licences](#) section, clicking on the top left-hand menu link, [G&L Online](#). From here scroll down to the bottom of the page and select [Go to G&L Online Service](#). The top bulleted option, [G&L Online Service – to make a grant application online](#) will take you into the G&L Online Service from which you are able to select the [click here to register](#) option.

Once you access this page there is a help icon in the form of a question mark which will give you more information about how to proceed with the registration.

You must now use your username and password to log in to the system and in order to fully activate your account you need to email the Technical Services team and inform them that you have set up as a new user. The team will then attach you to your case and you will be able to view your scheme details in full.

One application per property

Eligibility rules for BWW require that all woodlands on a property are submitted under one application. Where an owner has multiple properties, whether these be woodlands, a farm or estate, they can submit one application per property. However, a number of small woodlands (less than 10 hectares each) under the same ownership, which are within the same local authority area, should be included in a single application. If a Management Planner feels that it is not sensible to include a number of small woodlands in one plan then they should speak to the Woodland Officer before submitting an application.



**Current
newsletter
available on the
Forestry
Commission
Wales web site
www.forestry.gov.uk**



Agents as signatories

As was the case with the old WGS, agents who want to act as signatories on behalf of the applicant will need to provide FCW with a signed letter from the applicant giving their permission to do so.

A template letter of authority can be obtained from the Technical Services team - contact details towards the end of this issue.

Want to know more about BWW?

FCW publishes a range of information which owners and managers can use to find out more about BWW. Key documents include: 'BWW – A Guide for Owners' which provides an overview of the scheme, what it will do for the owner and what the owner's obligations are, and; BWW Grant Guide which provides an outline of the grants available. A series of 'Approach to' documents explain the BWW approach to various issues such as managing native woodlands, the social use of woodlands and woodland silviculture. The best way to access these is via the BWW reference library at www.forestry.gov.uk/forestry/infd-6upk3s or you can contact Customer Services for paper copies.

Contact details

- General BWW enquiries: Telephone 0845 604 0845 or log on to www.forestry.gov.uk/wales
- Technical Services Team: E-mail bww.ts@forestry.gsi.gov.uk
- G&L Online Service: Link www.eforestry.gov.uk
- BWW Reference Library: www.forestry.gov.uk/forestry/infd-6upk3s
- Suggestions for future issues: sam.davies@forestry.gsi.gov.uk

Next issue

- Issue 2 – December 2007

Current issue is available on the Forestry Commission Wales web site www.forestry.gov.uk



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