



Better woodlands for Wales

News from Forestry Commission Wales Grants and Regulations, Issue 19, May 2009

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Current issue and back issues available on the FCW website:

www.forestry.gov.uk/wales



STOP PRESS NEWS

A press release in May has caused some confusion! BWW is not one of the agri-environmental schemes to be closed by the Welsh Assembly Government. BWW remains open for business and so please continue to prepare and submit your applications.

Extra £100,000 to fight Phytophthora

FCW is providing an extra £100,000 of grant through BWW to help control the spread of Phytophthora ramorum and Phytophthora kernoviae in some Welsh woodlands.

The funding offers targeted support in two zones: around urban areas in south Wales and the Conwy Valley in north-west Wales.

An increased grant rate of 90% of the standard cost will be available through new and existing BWW schemes, to cut uninfected material during 2009/10.



Applications should be made through BWW in the normal way, using a Management Planner. The extra funding is limited and all applications will be dealt with under a 'first come, first served' basis'. Applications must be received by 31 August 2009 and the work must be done and claimed by 28 February 2010. Details are on the BWW grants page at <http://www.forestry.gov.uk/website/forestry.nsf/byunique/infid-6j2hal>



Management Planners discussion forum on the web

This external discussion forum can be found at <http://bww.freeforums.org/> Registration is required before users can post messages or replies. Users should use the same e-mail address as shown against their entry on the FCW list of management planners / specialist assessors to assist in validation. Once registration has been approved you they be notified by e-mail. This is to prevent abuse of the site.

Staff update



We are pleased to welcome Kevin Taylor to the FCW Grants and Regulations team as Business and Projects Manager on a three year secondment from the Welsh Assembly Government's Rural Payments Division (RPD). Previously Kevin managed a team of Process Managers who ran various Rural Development Schemes, including Farm Woodland Scheme, Farm Woodland Premium Scheme and Improved Land Premium. He has also worked for CCW on the Tir Cymen and Tir Gofal schemes.

BWW Committed funds

The summary below shows the level of funding committed for the next 3 years as at the end of April 2009.

Year	Budget	Committed	Committed	Paid	Paid
09/10	£3,060,000	£3,603,490	118%	£100,123	3%
10/11	£3,240,000	£1,585,074	49%		
11/12	£3,280,000	£1,114,956	34.00%		

We are keen to ensure that committed funds are spent and need the sector to work with us on this. Please let us know ASAP of any approved operations that will not occur during 09/10 using the Amendment form (FM02) which you can find on the BWW website. This should be completed and emailed to bww.ts@forestry.gsi.gov.uk providing us with this information will allow us to manage the grant budget and to reallocate funds to activities that will be completed in 09/10.

We are aware that there are several BWW cases where work has already been completed, or will be completed, in 09/10. We are holding a reserve list of cases that any released funds can be allocated towards. This reserve list will consist of cases where work has been completed or will definitely be completed in 09/10. For this purpose we have developed a proforma which you can download from our reference library to inform us of any work which has either been completed or will be completed in 09/10. Please can you complete this and email to bww.ts@forestry.gsi.gov.uk as soon as possible.

By sensible management of the grant funds we will know whether the work can be carried out within the existing allocation or if there is a need to look for more funds. We do not want to have any unspent grant funds at the end of the year so please advise of any work that will not go ahead as soon as you can. There is no restriction on the number of amendments that you can submit to change claim years.

Customer Survey & New BWW guides

Many thanks to those who responded to the Customer survey, we had a good return and a summary will be provided in a newsletter later this year.

A number of new or revised documents have been drafted and will be published during May and June 2009. All Management Planners will be sent notification once they are in our BWW reference library, which you can find at www.forestry.gov.uk/forestry/inf6-6upk3s

'BWW Business rules' the rules regarding Woodland Improvement Grant have now been published in the BWW reference library. It will be updated later in the year to include new planting and restocking rules.

'BWW and Welsh Assembly Government' will detail how to obtain a CRN and how to register customer and land details with WAG.

'How to use the WIG cost Calculator' will be updated and issued in early June. Until this document is released, please disregard the rules within the old document and use the new Business Rules document.

'How to manage your BWW contract' will be updated and issued in early June.

Minister tours BWW schemes

Rural Affairs Minister Elin Jones visited Powys during May and met farmers and small woodland owners who were reaping the benefits of the Better Woodlands for Wales (BWW) grant scheme which was developed specifically for Welsh woodlands.

The Minister's tour was a precursor to the introduction of a new, streamlined process designed for small farm woodlands to help them meet the aims of the Welsh Assembly's strategy for woodlands and trees, 'Woodlands for Wales'. The new approach known as 'BWW Smallwoods' was launched on the 21st May.

The strategy aims to encourage an increase in native and mixed woodlands and bring more native woodlands into active management, and the BWW funded projects in Powys provided the Minister with an opportunity to view three examples of how this was being achieved through good practice.

The Minister's first visit was to Coed Cwm Woods, near Dolor, where owners Dr Wolfgang Schaefer and Kingsley George showed the Minister two hectares of hardwood planted for timber 15 years ago. Encouraged by successful establishment, they then bought a 3 hectare ancient wood in 2007 which is managed primarily to enhance bio-diversity. Management planner Evelyn Over produced a scheme which has grant aided work including fencing, the creation of an access track for management operations, grey squirrel control to minimise damage to the broadleaves, bracken control and high pruning of the hardwoods to increase the future value of the timber. Already the owners are seeing the rewards of their labours in a great increase of self-seeded native trees and ground flora following stock exclusion and a greatly reduced heating bill. 'We are now completely self-sufficient in wood for our heating system from managing our woodlands sustainably' Dr Schaefer told the Minister.

The tour then moved on to Glanmiheli Farm near Kerry, Newtown, where Geraint and Anabel Powell have renewed two shelterwoods on their 200 hectare farm for conservation and to help provide shelter for their 500 Welsh mule and Beulah ewes and 80 suckler beef. The woods were felled and re-planted under BWW, with a mixture of conifers and broadleaves, after fencing the site to exclude stock. The Powells are both keen to give something back to the land that supports them and more re-planting and uneconomic thinning of woods planted in 1998 is the next work to be grant-aided by the BWW scheme.

The final visit of the day was to Glanhafren, a 20 hectare woodland which Mr and Mrs Morris Rogers bought from the Forestry Commission in 1998. The couple are natives of Montgomeryshire and together with their sons, run a successful tractor machinery company. Glanhafren holds many fond memories for Mr Rogers who remembers the wood being planted and showed the Minister the site of the old Forestry Commission tree nursery where the trees were grown. Local people are also welcomed into the woodlands to share in the enjoyment of walking through this peaceful spot. The family will start extracting some of the mature and good quality timber from the woodland this year. The grant scheme will help meet the costs of replanting the felled areas and maintaining tracks. As much timber as possible will be used by Mr. Rogers' son, Hywel for fencing on his 41 hectare farm. Firewood will also be a useful resource for the family.

Elin Jones said, "I was thrilled to see how the Better Woodlands for Wales grants scheme was helping farmers and small woodland owners to bring the trees on their land into management. "Doing so not only helps to achieve the environmental benefits sought by the Woodlands for Wales strategy, but also brings invaluable benefits to society and, of course, provides farmers with an important economic opportunity in these uncertain times."



from left to right: Woodland Officer Ken Smith, Minister for Rural Affairs Elin Jones, woodland owner Dr Wolfgang Schaefer

Improvements to GLOS

More improvements are planned for our on-line service, GLOS in late July. These include:

- an update to ensure CRN and payee details are entered prior to submitting a Management plan
- the facility to download from GLOS sub-compartments and operations in a format suitable to use with EXCEL
- a change to the format of the contract

A further update is planned for September. This is likely to include improvements to contract maps and a report to highlight unlinked Features, Operations or Sub-compartments to help during the spatial linking process. The facility to allow operation details to be uploaded to GLOS from the WIG cost calculator is planned for November.



Tips and hints for using GLOS

Payee details

When entering the Customer Reference Number (CRN) into your BWW case, you must select the "main applicant" from the drop-down list. The "main applicant" for a case must be the person identified to WAG as the "Main Contact" when applying for a CRN. If the main applicant is left blank, GLOS will produce an error when approving which may result in the case approval being delayed.

Native woodland validation

The BWW rules allow for up to 5% non-native species as a component of the planted area, but GLOS will not allow species of less than 5% **overall area** to be entered. When entering non-native species into a **native woodland new planting** or **restocking** operation where there is open ground you should..

Detail the non-native species in the description as a minor component i.e. <5% of the area.

OR

Detail the open ground (if less than 15% of the overall area) in the description and record the non-native as a species."

CRN update

We have recently been in very productive discussions with the Rural Payments Division (RPD) to look at some of the issues raised by Management Planners. Emphasis has also been given to ensuring front office WAG staff are up to date with the new guidance.

- Management Planners should notify FCW as soon as they know the Customer Reference Number (CRN) for an applicant so that FCW can ensure that RPD have registered the applicant as a forestry customer. The applicant needs to be registered as a forestry customer so that their details are passed to GLOS as part of the validation process. The CRN number should be emailed to bww.ts@forestry.gsi.gov.uk with 'New CRN' in the subject heading.
- RPD have provided the contact details that Management Planners can use to check whether applicants are fully registered with a CRN and payee details. Although RPD cannot provide any bank details if Planners email these to RPD they will respond to indicate whether these match the details that they hold.

We suggest that you ask the following questions:-

- Are these the same bank details as held by RPD against CRN ref ****. Then list sort code and account number that the applicant has provided you with.
- Is CRN ref**** registered as a forestry customer because they intend to apply for BWW?
- Is there any reason why a BWW case using this CRN and payee details should not proceed?
- WAG have instructed their front office staff to accept applications for Customer Reference Numbers/Holding Numbers (Form Reg 10) on behalf of customers, from agents and Management Planners. The agents/Management Planners can now both complete and sign the application form on behalf of the customer. The Trading Title must show the customer's details, not the agent's.

The contact details are:-

Gillian Langdon Carmarthen Front-office gillian.langdon@wales.gsi.gov.uk 01267 225361	Maria Francis Llandrindod Wells Front-office francismc@wales.gsi.gov.uk 01597 828265	Grace Williams Caernarfon Front-office gracew@wales.gsi.gov.uk 01286 662175
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- The customer will still need to sign the Customer Detail Form (CDW). This is where he will authorise the agent/Management Planner to act on his behalf. When the CDW is submitted it will be necessary to check that the agent/Management planner is the authorised person permitted to complete forms on behalf of the respective customer.
- We have also asked, on behalf of the Management planner, if the same bank account can be used for more than one CRN. For example, a planner may want to channel their customer's grant payments through a central account. EC rules (885/2006) state that it is acceptable for the customer to assign whatever bank account they like for receipt of their payment.

A new document on the full CRN and land registration process will be published shortly – see 'New BWW Guides' on page 2.

Sensitive Information in IFES Responses

Management Planners are reminded that parts of the reports provided by the IFES responders, in particular the Local Record Centres, may contain sensitive and confidential information. In each case the areas containing this type of information will be clearly marked and proper regard must be given to the level of sensitivity or confidentiality. As a consequence of receiving this information FCW have agreed that anyone who has access to this information will not pass it on to third parties without the permission of the Local Record Centre.

Treatment of FCW staff

We have noticed that on occasion, some Management Planners have been becoming frustrated at delays in BWW approvals. Incoming email to the BWW team has been of a sarcastic or abusive nature. We can assure you that FCW staff are dedicated to processing BWW cases as quickly as possible whilst ensuring that they meet the requirements of the RDP. Whilst we can appreciate that Planners may be under pressure from owners, these emails can undermine the morale of staff who are trying their best to process their caseloads.

Please will you avoid sending these types of email. If you have any concerns regarding BWW then these should be fed in via your representative on the Stakeholder Group. Information on the work of the Stakeholders group can be found at <http://www.forestry.gov.uk/forestry/INFD-7M2DY2>

Contact us...

For general BWW enquiries, telephone: 0845 604 0845 or log on to: www.forestry.gov.uk/wales
For technical queries, email: bww.ts@forestry.gsi.gov.uk
For the GLOS Service link: www.eforestry.gov.uk
and with suggestions for future issues, email: alison.evans@forestry.gsi.gov.uk

