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WOODLANDS
FOR WALES

TECHNICAL NEWSLETTER

Issue 9 – August 2007

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Editors note

Despite some further problems with Grants and Licences (G&L) Online I'm pleased to say that the 50th Better Woodlands for Wales (BWW) plan was approved at the end of July. We now have 51 plans approved and at the time of writing there was another 5 awaiting approval. There has been some fantastic effort put in by both planners and FCW staff. I'm sure planners will join me in saying a big "thanks" to the Woodland Officers and Technical Services Officers who have been providing support and guidance and helping to get plans approved quickly. Amongst the planners I'd like to acknowledge the hard work that all planners are putting in but in particular some special recognition for the following:

Philip Davies – **Best first plan** for Llyn Helyg, Mostyn Estate
Richard Godefroy – **Best large/complex plan** for Llangibby Estate
Graham Heath – **Best overall standard** across a range of plans

£50 worth of vouchers will be awarded to each of the three named above and in the next issue hopefully we'll see some new names receiving the vouchers.

The G&L team and the Technical Group met recently to review the G&L Online process and team members are now considering the detail of some suggested improvements.

Although consolidation fees have come to an end, FCW have now introduced 'top-up' fees to help planners cover the additional costs that they are incurring as a result of settling into the new process. All planners should have received an e-mail explaining the new fees. If you were close to meeting the August deadline but can demonstrate that the recent instability problems with GLOS prevented you from completing the plan, we will consider requests for a short extension to enable you to do so.

BWW grant contracts and changes to Standard Terms and Conditions

We are now starting to issue BWW grant contracts to woodland owners who have an approved management plan. The reason for the delay has been 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 in order to avoid further disruption. During the period of the delay we have been making some changes to the terms and conditions. When BWW was launched last year, the terms and

Revised BWW terms and conditions can be downloaded from the FCW website at <http://www.forestry.gov.uk/forestry/inf-d-6tsj8s>



BWW New Planting Grants were launched at the Royal Welsh Show, completing the suite of grants available for woodland management and creation.

The new BWW Grant Guide contains full details of all grants available.

conditions were similar to those under WGS. However, a number of changes were needed in order to ensure that BWW meets the requirements of the new EU regulations that govern the 2007-13 RDP.

However, when we consulted the BWW Stakeholder Group on the proposed changes, comments were submitted on a wide range of issues. It has taken several months to work through these issues and to clarify with the Welsh Assembly Government, their interpretation of the EU regulations.

The changes have now been finalised and a copy of the revised terms and conditions can be downloaded from the Forestry Commission Wales (FCW) website (<http://www.forestry.gov.uk/forestry/inf-d-6tsj8s>). They will be used for all new BWW grant contracts issued to woodland owners from now on.

Forestry Commission Wales at the Royal Welsh Show

A new package of grants for BWW was launched at the Royal Welsh Show on Tuesday 24th July 2007.

Speaking at the CONFOR marquee, FC Wales Director Ian Forshaw announced the introduction of the New Planting Grants which are aimed at creating thousands of hectares of new woodland over the next decade.

He said, "Woodlands have a vitally important role to play in the sustainable development of Wales. No other land use can provide the combination of environmental, social and economic benefits to society that can be derived from well planned and well managed woodlands."

Peter Garson, FC Wales Head of Grants and Licences, then spelt out the details of the new package and said, "The way the new grants are structured will enable more land owners and farmers to look at the opportunities to create attractive and well-designed new woodlands."

Mr Garson said the grants placed more emphasis on creating mixed and native woodlands and addressed the issues relating to climate change.

"Part of the grants available encourage the creation of native woodlands in locations throughout Wales which will lead to better habitat networks which in turn will help wildlife to adapt to the changing climate," he said.

Grants are structured in similar categories to 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.

Following the launch of the new grants, there was an opportunity for owners to discuss plans for their woodland with management planners trained by FC Wales to help them with their grant applications.

The networking session also took place in the CONFOR marquee and members of the FCW Grants and Licences team were on hand to offer advice and provide information on the BWW application process.

BWW Owners Newsletter

The first edition of the Better Woodlands for Wales (BWW) Owners Newsletter, the FCW publication aimed at owners, agents and woodland managers in Wales who are interested in the new BWW scheme, was also launched at the Royal Welsh Agricultural Show this year. 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. Web link: <http://www.forestry.gov.uk/forestry/inf6-6tsj8s>



New laws, giving greater protection to European Protected Species (EPS), were brought in earlier this month - more information is provided across page.



Changes to the protection for European Protected Species

European Protected Species (EPS) are to benefit from increased protection from this summer. New laws, which implement EU legislation, were brought in on 21 August 2007, through changes to the Habitats Regulations.

The species that will have the greatest impact on woodland management in Wales are Bats (all species,) Common Otter, Dormouse and the Great Crested Newt.

It will no longer be a defence to show that the killing, capture or disturbance of such species or the destruction or damage of their breeding sites or resting places was the incidental and unavoidable result of a lawful activity. We will now have to assess the impact of all operations and try to reduce or avoid this to acceptable levels. If this is not possible and an offence cannot be avoided then it will be possible to apply for a licence.

To give you support in dealing with these changes FCW, along with the Countryside Council for Wales (CCW) and Welsh Assembly Government (WAG) has been developing guidance to help you manage woodlands when these species are present. These give advice on assessing the presence of EPS, assessing the possible impact of operations and practical strategies for avoiding committing offences. These are attached to this newsletter and available on the web at <http://www.forestry.gov.uk/forestry/INFD-769erv>. It is important that you read these carefully, and follow the guidance.

We also intend to hold training days for Management Planners and Specialist Assessors on the subject, which are likely to take place in October. We will be in touch soon with some dates. If there is sufficient demand then we are willing to open these up to all those involved in woodland management.

FCW is not the licensing authority but we are working with the licensing agencies, which for Wales is split between the WAG and the CCW, to produce guidance on the EPS licence application process.

For more information on the amendments to the Habitats Regulations: <http://www.defra.gov.uk/wildlife-countryside/ewd/ewd09.htm>, <http://www.defra.gov.uk/wildlife-countryside/ewd/habitats-qa5.htm> and http://new.wales.gov.uk/topics/environmentcountryside/env_cons_management/conservation_biodiversity/habitats_directive/?lang=en

Changes to the BWW Management Planner & Specialist Assessor Application Process

Following feedback from the BWW Selection Panel we are in the process of revising the application process for planners and specialists. The main aim of the exercise is to combine the Expression of Interest Form, the General Application and the Evidence Portfolio but we have also taken the opportunity to improve the other forms to give applicants a better steer on the evidence required.



Management Plans

Planner	Plans Approved
Graham Heath	6
Alison Ginn	5
Carl Bridges	4
Evelyn Over	4
John Jeremy	4
Alison Wheeler	3
Chris Radford	3
Julian Miller	3
Richard Godefroy	3
Arthur Wiggins	2
Joe Fielding	2
John Lees	2
Mat Ridley	2
Richard Curtis	2
Iain Peddie	1
John Ferguson	1
Neill Scott	1
Phil Davies	1
Rob Marsh	1
Simon Ayres	1
Total	51



In summary we have -

- Combined the Expression of Interest, General Application and Evidence Portfolio into one document.
- Revised the individual application forms, reducing the amount of guidance and changing the wording in the headings.
- With reduced guidance on the application there will be an example of a completed section of each application form. This is section 3 Marketing and Economics for the MP application.
- The guidance document has been revised to take account of these changes.
- Finally we will renumber the documentation making the guidance document A1 and then renumbering the rest in the same sequence as before.

There is still some outstanding work on the all specialist assessor examples which we hope to conclude shortly.

We plan to publish these on the BWW Internet site in September and publicise the changes through the BWW web page

Consolidation fees

The formal deadline of 31st August 2007 for claiming the original consolidation fees stands. However, because a week was lost during July due to system instability problems we are willing to allow planners who are close to finishing plans but who will miss the deadline, to negotiate a submission date for plans during September. This should be done on a case-by-case basis with the Woodland Officer responsible for the plan. We do not expect to provide a further extension to the consolidation fees unless we have further system problems.

A new type of consolidation fee called 'top-up' fees have been introduced with immediate effect. All planners have received details of these. The new fees are paid when planners complete plans to agreed deadlines. For more details please go to [http://www.forestry.gov.uk/pdf/Consolidation_fees_BWW_New_arrangements.pdf/\\$FILE/Consolidation_fees_BWW_New_arrangements.pdf](http://www.forestry.gov.uk/pdf/Consolidation_fees_BWW_New_arrangements.pdf/$FILE/Consolidation_fees_BWW_New_arrangements.pdf).

New and revised Grants and Licences publications

Level 1 – '**Approach to**' documents explain the BWW framework.

Level 2 – **Grant guides** explain what grants are available.

Level 3 – '**How to**' documents give guidance and instruction on how to do something

Level 4 – **Business rules** give very specific detail on rules.

Level 5 – **Templates and forms** are the actual documents that are used to physically do something e.g. prepare a specialist assessment.

Level 6 – **Publicity material**.

Level	Name	Status
1	AT10 Approach to Social Issues	Revised
1	AT14 Approach to Management Planning	New
2	GG02 BWW Grant Guide	New
3	GOH02 How to prepare and submit a BWW Foundation Plan	Revised
3	GOH09 How to manage your BWW contract	New
3	GOH10 How to use features and factors	New
5	FM03 Severance fee claim form	New
5	FM04 Transfer of obligations form	New
5	LT02 BWW letter of authority	Revised



Current newsletter and back issues available on the Forestry Commission Wales web site www.forestry.gov.uk



5	SA03 Templates 01, 02, 03 & 04	Revised
5	SA05 Ecology template	New
5	SA08 PAWS template 01 (replaces 01, 02, 03)	Revised
6	Tree felling and the law leaflet	Revised
6	Approved Management Planners list	Revised
6	G&L Structure Chart	Revised
6	BWW status diagram	New
6	European Protected Species Guidance Documents	New
6	BWW Standard Terms and Conditions	Revised

New publications from Forest Research

Code	Name
	A woodfuel strategy for England
Bulletin (FCBU127)	Choice of Sitka Spruce Seed Origins for Use in British Forests
	Forest Condition Survey 2005
FCFC003	Forest Reproductive Materials: Regulations controlling seed, cuttings, and planting stock for forestry in Great Britain
FCFG003	Roundwood and Sawlog Volume Tables
Practice Note (FCPN014)	Managing the pine weevil on lowland pine
Technical Note (FCTN015)	Using dye markers to reduce pesticide use
Information Note (FCIN084)	The potential for direct seeding of birch on restock sites
Information Note (FCIN085)	Evaluating biodiversity in fragmented landscapes: applications of landscape ecology tools

For more information, see Publications links at www.forestry.gov.uk/peopleandtrees

Contact details

- General BWW enquiries: Telephone 0845 604 0845 or log on to www.forestry.gov.uk
- Technical queries: Email bww.ts@forestry.gsi.gov.uk
- G&L Online Service: Link www.eforestry.gov.uk
- WIG Cost Calculator queries: Email wig.costings@forestry.gsi.gov.uk
- Suggestions for future issues: Email Sam.davies@forestry.gsi.gov.uk
- BWW Owners Newsletter: Link <http://www.forestry.gov.uk/forestry/infd-6tsj8s>

Issue Dates:

BWW Technical Newsletter	BWW Owners Newsletter
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Issue 10 – 26 October 2007 Issue 11 – 12 December 2007 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Issue 1 – July 2007 Issue 2 – December 2007

Current issue and back issues available on the Forestry Commission Wales web site www.forestry.gov.uk