



COETIROEDD
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BETTER
WOODLANDS
FOR WALES

NEWSLETTER

Issue 5 - December 2006



**31st August 2007
is announced as
the cut off date for
claiming all
consolidation
payments**



Editors note

Welcome to the last issue of the newsletter in 2006. In this issue we define woodlands under Better Woodlands for Wales (BWW), detail incentives to agents for promoting ROFI and see the launch of the new BWW reference library on the Forestry Commission Wales (FCW) website. There is this, plus much, much more, so please read on.

Management Planner consolidation payments

Originally FCW stated that consolidation payments (up to £2,000 per Planner) must be claimed within 1 year of signing the Framework Agreement. Because different Planners have received their agreements at different times we have decided to set a cut off date of 31st August 2007 for claiming all consolidation payments. All Planners must claim payments by this date. Remember that eligibility for the payments depends on the value of the Plan Preparation Grant for plans that have been submitted and approved. Consolidation fees can be claimed by sending an invoice to the Technical Services Team in North Wales. A Customer Reference Number (CRN) is not required.

When is woodland not woodland?

Many Planners have asked what the definition of woodland is within BWW. The answer to this question relates to the BWW rule that all woodlands on a property must be included in the management plan.

The old Woodland Grant Scheme (WGS) rule was that woodlands had to have greater than 20% canopy cover. WGS also stated that new planting areas must be wider than 15 metres but there were no thresholds for existing woodland and FCW feels that there is benefit bringing narrower areas into the scheme. So, for the purposes of BWW, these thresholds have been reduced and it has been decided that FCW will not insist on areas less than 0.1 hectares or narrower than 12 metres being included in the management plan. (Areas less than 0.1 hectares cannot be mapped within the G&LOnline system although they can be identified as a point on the map.).

Do multiple woodlands on a site = multiple BWW applications?

Your questions are answered in this issue



Monetary assistance for agents promoting ROFI projects on behalf of FCW



If the Planner is particularly keen to include areas below these thresholds, perhaps because they have particular environmental or social value, then they will need to make the case to the Woodland Officer **before** submitting the application. FCW will map all areas of woodland shown on the application map but does not guarantee funding for areas below the thresholds unless they have been agreed with the Woodland Officer. Similarly, if the Planner wants to exclude areas of woodland from the plan that are above the threshold then they need to make the case to the Woodland Officer **before** submitting an application. In this way the Planner and Woodland Officer can agree what is and isn't woodland and the application is then correct when it is submitted.

One application per property

As with the above topic, Planners have sought further guidance on the BWW rule about all woodlands on a property being submitted under one application. Firstly, the word property is important because the rule refers to all woodlands on a property not all woodlands under one ownership. So 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 the 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. Where woodland has been split and sold to multiple owners, FCW may refuse a BWW application for part of the woodland and insist that all parts of the property are included in a single application. This will be at the Woodland Officers discretion. In this situation the Planner must speak to the Woodland Officer before submitting an application.

Game guidance

The Game Conservancy Trust has released new guidance on the sustainable release of game birds. Please find the document attached to this newsletter. BWW management plans will be expected to follow the best practice guidance in this document. You will also find a link to this document on their website at: http://www.gct.org.uk/conservationguide_intro.asp?ImageId=11 (The document is available to view and print but not to download)

Reclaiming Our Forgotten Inheritance (ROFI) spend

In previous issues of the BWW Newsletter we have mentioned the Objective 1 project called ROFI which is providing grants for work to revert Plantations on Ancient Woodland Sites (PAWS) to native woodland. This project closes in March 2008 and it is important that we fully utilise the money available. To help achieve this FCW will be offering assistance to agents to help them market the scheme on our behalf. The rules of the assistance are:

- £50 per hectare to be paid directly to the agent for every PAWS scheme implemented in the Objective 1 area.



Thresholds for Coed Cymru Officers working within BWW have been agreed



- The money can only be claimed when work is implemented. Agents must agree with the Woodland Officer the exact detail of what 'implemented' means, but FCW will generally expect 80% of the work to be done before grant money is claimed.
- Only areas greater than 4 hectares are eligible for this payment.
- There is a maximum payment per scheme of £1,000.
- All schemes must be implemented and the grant claimed before March 2008.
- Agents must provide FCW with outline details of any sites where they want to take advantage of these payments before 1st April 2007 – contact Tricia Knight at the North Wales office or e-mail tricia.knight@forestry.gsi.gov.uk

Some other useful information:

- There is no need to make a separate application for ROFI money. Use the BWW application process.
- FCW will consider a site reverted to native woodland when there is more than 50% site native trees in the canopy.
- 75% grants are still available for work on PAWS sites.
- Sites, which are being reverted over time, are still eligible for ROFI money.
- Eligible operations include tracks, uneconomic thinning and control of invasive plants.

Update on Coed Cymru within BWW

FCW and Coed Cymru have agreed thresholds for Coed Cymru Officers working within BWW. As a general rule Coed Cymru staff will not work on BWW schemes where the total area of coniferous woodland on a property exceeds 4 hectares. This threshold includes PAWS which have not yet been reverted back to native woodland. There are no thresholds for broadleaved woodlands but Coed Cymru will pass sites with high value timber on to private sector Planners. Also, there are no thresholds where Coed Cymru are working on sites owned by a major funding partner e.g. a Local Authority or National Park, or at the request of FCW staff. A 2 hectare threshold has also been set for new planting schemes.

With the closure of Native Woodland Plans a new approach for providing support to farmers in **Tir Gofal** has been developed. There will no longer be a mandatory requirement to have a management plan. Instead, a Coed Cymru Officer will visit the farm and provide guidance on woodland management. If the farmer shows interest in woodland management then they have the option of entering BWW. Coed Cymru will pass all sites above the thresholds (mentioned above) to private sector Planners, but will deal with smaller sites themselves. Fencing work will be paid for by Tir Gofal as will other woodland operations that amount to less than £2,000 grant aid. Therefore FCW will not expect to see smaller schemes come into BWW.

A version of the Woodland Improvement Grant (WIG) Calculator will be produced for schemes where the applicant takes the option of retaining Coed Cymru as the agent. This version of the Calculator will have management and supervision costs taken out and the applicant will not be eligible to claim these.

Some useful tips included here for preparing maps for BWW



Mapping issues – useful tips for preparing BWW maps

Map request - can be made for a 1:10,000; 1:5,000 and/or a 1:2,500 scale, we prefer the 1:2,500 scale to digitise from as the details are shown more clearly. Please note, the FCW website also holds hard copy and digital map request forms.

When submitting maps, please ensure that all the woodlands on the property are included - do not cut woodland off at the edge of the paper map. Each individual woodland block needs to be accurately marked in a fine red pen and a yellow highlight. If we are unsure of where the red boundary lies on the map, we will draw the boundary as shown on our Ordnance Survey® MasterMap® data.

Please verify that the digitised (mapped) area is accurate by looking on the Spatial Linking Tool as soon as the case is at Wales Foundation Plan (FR) status in "My Work". Inform the Technical Service Officer dealing with the case, if there are any corrections to be made. The mapped areas need to be accurate as these areas are used to calculate the grant.

If we have declined your application because of a problem with maps, please do not create a new scheme and raise a new number - just press the submit button on your original application and that will send the application back to our main screen. When sub-compartments share a track as a boundary - we will digitise (map) down the middle of the track.

2006 - 2007 Timetables for selecting new Management Planners and Specialist Assessors

The following timetable provides dates by which your applications must be submitted to become a Management Planner, and/or Specialist Assessor(s) plus information on the field assessments where required by the Selection Panel.

Closing dates for applications to be a Management Planner or Specialist Assessor

31st December 2006

30th June 2007

31st December 2007

Meeting dates for the BWW Selection Panel

23rd January 2007

4th September 2007

January 2008

Field Assessments (where required)

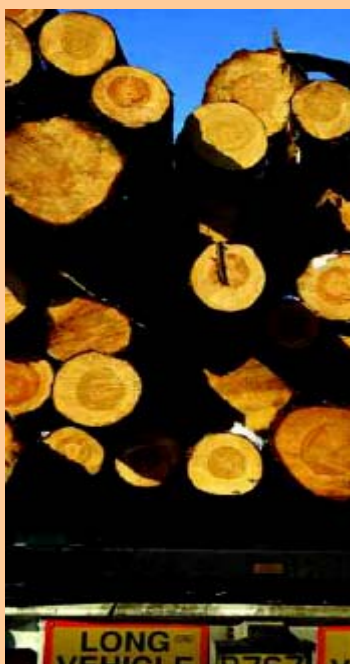
Ecology - to be organised for second half of May or June 2007

CCF - to be organised for second half of May or June 2007

PAWS - to be organised for second half of May or June 2007

Social - nothing planned at the moment

Selection timetables for Management Planners and Specialist Assessors listed over page



General BWW enquiries:
Tel. 0845 604 0845 or
log on to
www.forestry.gov.uk/forestry/infid-5z8jqk



Technical queries e-mail
bww.ts@forestry.gsi.gov.uk



BWW Documents – BWW Reference Library

A new BWW Reference Library has been created on the FCW website. Management Planners are strongly advised to check this regularly for new documents which are being published as and when they are ready. Many documents are also now available in the medium of Welsh and there is an on-going programme of translation including the updating of all selection forms and supporting documentation.

BWW CCF & PAWS assessments

Management Planners should be aware that they must agree all specialist assessments with Woodland Officers at the Foundation Plan stage.

In particular, with Continuous Cover Forestry (CCF) assessments the Planner should submit the stability scoring (the first part of the assessment) prior to Foundation Plan approval. Areas that fail the stability score will not be eligible for a full assessment. PAWS assessments must cover areas on the Ancient Woodland Inventory but remember, if the area has greater than 50% site native trees in the canopy FCW will categorise it as native woodland not PAWS. PAWS assessments on areas that do not appear on the inventory must be agreed with the Woodland Officer in the Foundation Plan.

Supporting evidence (e.g. stability scoring sheets, photographs of PAWS features, etc.) should be attached to the Foundation Plan using the facilities under 'Special Assessments'.

To attach an item to support a special assessment, enter the special assessment including description (for PAWS and CCF the estimated area is also required). Submit the assessment and then click on upload/view documents. Choose from the drop down menu (which lists the special assessments you have entered). Enter a description. Browse to a file. Click on upload. Files can be read from this screen. Foundation Plans will be approved more quickly if there's good supporting evidence.

Stakeholder report

All Foundation Plans must have a stakeholder report attached.

Copies of the report (BWW document reference SA 09) were sent to all Planners recently. This report and an example of how to complete it are now available on the BWW Reference Library website.

New planting

FCW will publish provisional details of new planting grants on the website before Christmas. We will send a link to you once this has been done.

Next Issue: January 2007