



Information Note 13

Transitional Arrangements for BWW

July 2010

Background

Forestry Commission Wales (FCW) currently provides grant aid via the Better Woodlands for Wales (BWW) scheme to purchase public benefits in private woodlands to help deliver the Woodlands for Wales strategy. BWW is funded through the Rural Development Plan (RDP) for Wales.

FCW has reviewed how the woodland grants should be delivered in future.

The aim of the review was to reposition the grant aid to better engage and deliver the following outcomes from the Woodlands for Wales strategy:

- Increased woodland creation
- Increased areas of farm woodlands being brought into management
- Increased public benefits being purchased in non-farm woodlands

As a result of the review FCW and the Welsh Assembly Government's Department for Rural Affairs have agreed that woodland grants will be integrated into Glastir from 1st January 2013 in the following way:

- The new woodland options will be developed for launch on 1st January 2013 along with the Glastir targeted elements
- The woodland options will be accessible directly to woodland only owners who have not entered the Glastir 'all Wales element'
- The woodland options will be accessible to farmers who have entered Glastir through the 'all Wales element' as part of the Glastir 'targeted element'

FCW now need to managed the closure of BWW to avoid a significant spend beyond the life of the current Rural Development Plan.

The Minister for Rural Affairs has decided that the BWW grant scheme will close on 31st December 2010. Any existing and new applications will be given until 31st December 2010 by which to complete to Foundation Plan approval stage. All BWW contracts must then be approved by 31st December 2011.

FCW is currently developing Glastir woodland creation grants which will be available from autumn 2010. These will not form part of the BWW scheme.

FCW will deliver the Glastir woodland creation grants on behalf of the Welsh Assembly Government from Autumn 2010 until 1st January 2013. After then, these grants will be



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delivered by the Welsh Assembly Government as part of the 'targeted element' of Glastir.

What has been decided?

On 19th July 2010 the Minister for Rural Affairs agreed to the closure of the BWW grant scheme and the integration of forestry grant aid into Glastir from 1st January 2013. All BWW applications will be given until 31st December 2010 for completion to Foundation Plan approval stage. This includes existing registered applications and new applications. All BWW applications must be approved by 31st December 2011. After that date FCW will continue to manage BWW as a legacy scheme until approved contracts expire.

Why is BWW not running until 2013 when Glastir starts?

We want to encourage applicants to apply for the Glastir woodland options as soon as these are available. Applicants will have until 31st December 2010 to get their proposals to Foundation Stage approval and a further year (i.e. until 31 December 2011) within which to get them formally approved. Approved BWW plans will carry on beyond 1st January 2013 as these are 5 year contracts. We need to plan now to avoid carrying significant BWW grant commitments beyond the end of the current Rural Development Plan.

Can I continue to submit new applications?

New applications (Initial Applications) will not be accepted after the 17th November 2010. This allows time to process Information from External Sources (IFES) request before the Foundation Plan submission date.

It is then the owner's and management planner's responsibility to ensure that any application is developed to the required standard and submitted to FCW by 17th December 2010 to enable the full Foundation Plan approval to be carried out by 31st December 2010. The BWW contract must be approved by 31st December 2011. No further consideration will be given to any applications after the deadline date.

What does foundation plan approval mean?

All BWW applications must have a Foundation Plan approved by FCW by 31st December 2010. Where the owner has indicated that they want to sign the Foundation Plan then they must have signed this and returned it to FCW by either posting a hard copy to reach the office at Clawdd Newydd by 31st December 2010 or emailing it to bww.ts@forestry.gsi.gov.uk by 31st December 2010.

Is there a deadline to submit the Foundation Plan to FCW for approval?

Yes, FCW aim to carry out the Foundation Plan approval within 2 weeks of receipt of a Foundation Plan that has been completed to the required standard. Therefore the final deadline for submission of a Foundation Plan to FCW for approval is 17th December 2010.

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We would advise planners to try and submit Foundation Plans for approval before this date where possible.

Where the owner wants to sign the Foundation Plan after FCW approval it is the planner's responsibility to ensure that sufficient time for this is allowed for this.

What about plans where the Foundation Plan is already approved?

Applications that are currently beyond Foundation Plan approval stage, or where the Foundation Plan is approved prior to 31st December 2010 can continue to progress as normal but the BWW contracts must be approved by 31st December 2011.

What is the deadline for approval of BWW contracts?

All BWW contracts must be approved by 31st December 2011. To enable the workload to be managed the timeline for the various stages are set out below. No cases will be considered after these deadlines.

Stage	FRA	FRS	MP	MP (FCW)	PRL1	DCT	APR
	Foundation plan received by FCW	Foundation plan signed by owner	Maps submitted for digitisation	Maps ready for spatial linking	Management Plan (required standard) submitted to FCW	Management Plan approved by FCW	Management Plan signed by owner & with FCW
Date	17 th December 2010	31 st December 2010	1 st July 2011	1 st Sept 2011	1 st October 2011	10 th December 2011	31 st December 2011

Will there be any restriction on claim years?

No, the usual 5 year contracts will be permitted and operations can be included up to and including 2015/16. So any BWW contracts that are approved in late 2011 will be able to claim grant up to 28th February 2016. We will continue to monitor annual commitments against budgets and offer alternative claims years up to and including 2015/16 as necessary.

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Will amendments be allowed for existing contracts?

In order to manage future commitments no amendments will be permitted after 19th July 2010 except for the following:

1. **Unforeseen natural events.** For example: windblow or disease resulting in the need to amend the felling and restocking plans.
2. **Significant new information comes to light.** For example: The discovery of a specially protected species or your work reveals a significantly important archaeological site that affects approved operations.
3. **Change of ownership or change to your details.** Change of ownership to all or part of the BWW.
4. **Prevention of a penalty.** Amendment to ensure that a claim will not result in a penalty.
5. **Change to agreed claim year for work in 2010/11 up to 31 October 2010.**
This allows you to re-schedule work and will release the budget for other BWW cases.

From 19th July 2010 no amendments will be accepted to increase the grant amount within the contract or to move claim years into the future except for any changes in line with point 5 above. If work is completed earlier than the claim year specified in the contract it may be possible for FCW to pay the claim earlier and you should contact bww.ts@forestry.gsi.gov.uk for advice.

I want to remove larch due to the risk of Phytophthora?

In cases where we agree that this is appropriate this will be classed as an unforeseen natural event and amendments will be permitted in line with Information Note 12 G&R Approach to Phytophthora Management. Where additional felling is agreed this can be approved using a felling licence. No additional BWW grant aid will be available towards any felling or restocking costs. See the FCW website for more information in respect of Phytophthora ramorum.

What will happen to severance fees?

There is no change. FCW will make severance payments if the planner has produced a Foundation Plan which meets the Commission's standards but, through no fault of the planner, the applicant decides to discontinue the application. We would need written confirmation from the owner that they have decided to withdraw.

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What about Glastir woodland creation?

FCW are delivering the Glastir Woodland Creation grants until 1st January 2013 after which they will be delivered by Glastir staff. This scheme is due to be launched in autumn 2010 and will remain open for applications until 2012. This scheme will use the Grants and Licenses Online Service (GLOS) IT system and some BWW processes but is not BWW. The details of this scheme are still under development and will be made available as soon as they are finalised.

What happens if I do not get my BWW application approved by 31st December 2011?

Any BWW applications which are not approved by 31 December 2011 will not be approved. It is the owner's and management planner's responsibility to ensure that any application is developed to the required standard and submitted to FCW in line with the timetable above to enable the full approval to be carried out by 31 December 2011.

If I have felling proposals and my BWW contract is not approved by 31st December 2011, what should I do?

You will need to submit a felling licence application to cover any felling or thinning that is not approved within a BWW contract.

Where can I find out more information regarding the transition arrangements for BWW?

Information will be available on the [BWW website](#) or if you have a query you can email us at bww.ts@forestry.gsi.gov.uk. For case specific enquires you should contact your woodland officer or technical services officer.