

**RECORD OF THE FIRST MEETING OF THE NEW SCOTTISH FORESTRY FORUM HELD IN THE CENTRAL BOARDROOM, SILVAN HOUSE, EDINBURGH ON WEDNESDAY 30 MARCH 2005 AT 1030**

**Present**

**Andrew Raven (Chair and Non Executive Forestry Commissioner)**  
**Bob McIntosh (Director Forestry Commission Scotland)**  
**Paul Ignatieff (Chair, South Scotland Regional Forestry Forum)**  
**Chris Badenoch (South Scotland Regional Forestry Forum)**  
**Martin Craig (South Scotland Regional Forestry Forum)**  
**Simon Rennie (Chair, Central Scotland Regional Forestry Forum)**  
**Tim Hall (Central Scotland Regional Forestry Forum)**  
**George McRobbie (Chair, Perth and Argyll Regional Forestry Forum)**  
**Lucy Sumsion (Perth and Argyll Regional Forestry Forum)**  
**Sheila Clark (Perth and Argyll Regional Forestry Forum)**  
**Priscilla Gordon-Duff (Chair, Grampian Regional Forestry Forum)**  
**Ian Francis (Grampian Regional Forestry Forum)**  
**John Kissock (Grampian Regional Forestry Forum)**  
**Ian Ross (Chair, Highland Regional Forestry Forum)**  
**Bob Stubbs (Highland Regional Forestry Forum)**  
**Bill Ritchie (Highland Regional Forestry Forum)**  
**Sally Thomas (Scottish Executive Environment and Rural Affairs Dept.)**  
**Alan Hampson (Scottish Natural Heritage)**  
**Cedric Wilkins (Scottish Forest Industries Cluster)**  
**Jon Hollingdale (Community Woodland Association)**  
**Helen Betts-Brown (Scottish Council for Voluntary Organisations)**  
**Ian McCall (Ramblers Association Scotland)**  
**Gordon Gray-Stephens (Scottish Environment Link)**  
**Andrew Fairbairn (Scottish Environment Link)**  
**George Lawrie (NFU Scotland)**  
**Hugh Clayden (FC Scotland)**  
**Kenny Murray (FC Scotland))**  
**Cameron Maxwell (FC Scotland)**  
**Kathy Brown & Nikki Johnstone (Joint Secretaries, FC Scotland)**

**Also in Attendance**

**Richard Broadhurst (Forestry Commission Scotland; item 2)**  
**Simon Hodge (Forestry Commission Scotland; items 3 & 4)**

**Apologies**

**Guy Wedderburn (Central Scotland Regional Forestry Forum)**  
**Alistair Speedie (The Convention of Scottish Local Authorities)**  
**David Crichton (ConFor)**  
**Hugh Insley (Chief Executive, Forest Enterprise Scotland)**

**Chair's Introductions and Preliminary Remarks**

Andrew Raven, as a Non Executive Forestry Commissioner and Chair of the National Committee for Scotland assumed the Chair. He warmly welcomed

everyone and formally opened the first meeting of the new national Scottish Forestry Forum, (the Forum).

Introductions and apologies were made and the Chair stated how encouraged he was to see such a large turn out of this strategically important group. He hoped that the broad and diverse membership would facilitate progress for sustainable forest management across Scotland.

### **1. The Scottish Forestry Forum – Governance (FF01/05)**

Bob McIntosh presented his paper, which outlined the proposed role of the Forum and the way it would conduct its business. The Forum **approved** all governance issues and, in addition, **asked** for a list of all its members, as currently constituted, using Annex C. The Forum also **agreed** that the handling of Forum membership changeover and term of office would need to be re-visited, perhaps next year, in light of the need for some continuity. The Forum also **agreed** to commit to a minimum of two full day business meetings each year, plus a public meeting. The relevant Annexes would be amended accordingly.

**(Action: Kenny Murray)**

The Forum discussed its work programme and the means of exchange with its Regional counterparts, in more detail. It **agreed** that flexibility was the key when allocating its business time between strategy reporting and monitoring versus forward thinking, strategic elements. The Forum also **agreed** that Forestry Commission Scotland (FCS) should also facilitate appropriate networking arrangements between the Regional Forum Chairs, where this was felt necessary. The Forum's overall view was that, once a new SFS was in place, its primary objective would be to monitor its implementation.

### **2. E-Forum(s) for Regional Forestry Forums and the Scottish Forestry Forum**

Richard Broadhurst provided a brief demonstration of a mock discussion site, currently under development on the FCS intranet. He advised that FCS would be pleased to provide the technical support and highlighted a number of administration details that would have to be resolved. The Forum debated how open and accessible the sites should be and it was **agreed** that, while providing a useful tool, their development should evolve within the Regional Forums. Jon Hollingdale, Bill Ritchie and Sheila Clark volunteered to work with FCS on their development, which would include discussions on the implications for open information.

**(Action: FCS/Forum volunteers)**

### **3. Form and Format of Progress Reports from FCS**

Bob McIntosh stated that the Forum would be presented at each meeting with a strategy progress report. Assessing progress against strategy aspirations, they would also highlight any relevant developments or problems, and

depending on the nature of these, would dictate either further reporting or discussion at the meeting. This was agreed.

Bob McIntosh also took the opportunity to update the Forum on the revised European Rural Development Regulation, which would come into force in January 2007. While some unravelling of the potential implications has still to be done, a number of positive outcomes had been identified, including increased support for forest environmental improvements; training; infrastructure and marketing. More serious consequences may lie in store for afforestation however, with proposed funding currently restricted to 50% of eligible costs. Working under a tight timescale, a lot of hard work is required to ensure that the support mechanisms for new planting improve.

DEFRA and the other UK Forestry Ministers are supportive and some members felt that some concerted NGO lobbying could add further value; and stress the importance of the RDR's impact on the rural social agenda. In the meantime, opportunities for consolidation for short-term gain were recognised, including encouraging increased planting levels in 2006. Land management contracts could also bring about more integrated support across the rural agencies. It was agreed that FCS would keep the Forum up to date with the unfolding progress, but the Forum acknowledged that pressure needed to be exerted on European partners and in Brussels, if a satisfactory outcome was to be achieved.

**(Action: FCS for updates)**

#### **4. Conclusion of Rural Development Work Theme From 2004 (FF02/05)**

Simon Hodge updated The Forum on the actions taken following the Forum's theme of last year, 'Forestry in Rural Development.' He highlighted the key issues identified by delegates at the public meeting of the Forum held in November 2004. Principal stakeholder organisations had been asked to respond to the paper, to identify current actions and priorities. The collated responses will be presented to the Forum in due course. Mr Hodge added that the priorities identified in the paper would feed into the initial consultation of the Scottish Forestry Strategy (SFS). This was noted.

#### **5. Review of the Scottish Forestry Strategy (SFS) (FF 03/05)**

Bob McIntosh presented his paper, which outlined the process and issues surrounding the review of the SFS. He clarified that regional differences would be reflected in the revised Strategy and that its development would be co-ordinated with its delivery. He stressed that the Strategy should focus on outcomes rather than on outputs and added that, although the Rural Development Regulation would set the framework, a new grant scheme would also be devised at the same time.

There was a lengthy discussion on the proposed issues, or topic papers, some areas of which are to be commissioned from outside FCS. The Forum

highlighted climate change, population, access, Woods in and around Towns, sustainable development, Scottish biodiversity and renewable energy as all being important themes and offers of assistance were given from Forum members for the latter four topics. The Forum **agreed** that one of the biggest challenges would be to engage the public in the review process. Focussing on outcomes would help facilitate this. The Forum **asked** Dr McIntosh whether the outcomes would be measurable. He stated that, while difficult, there was an aspiration to working towards having measurable outputs; an issue that had already been discussed by the National Committee. The Forum further **agreed** that the new Strategy should emphasise that it is there to serve both public and private forestry.

## **6. Issues for Consideration at Future Meetings and the Forum Work Plan**

The Forum **agreed** that it should concentrate primarily on the Review of the Strategy at this time and also **agreed** that FCS should host a workshop specifically for national organisation members, concentrating on the SFS review consultation process. The Chair stressed the need for both CoSLA and ConFor to be present at that event.

**(Action: Hugh Clayden)**

The Forum further **agreed** that there should be a further update on the Rural Development Regulation at the next meeting.

**(Action: Simon Hodge)**

## **7. Confirmation of Future Meeting Dates And Venues**

It was **agreed** that the next meeting should be timed so as to enable the Forum input into the first draft of the revised SFS. The date of the next meeting was agreed as **Friday, 30 September 2005**.

It was **noted** that a further meeting may need to be scheduled after the first draft production and this would be arranged at the September meeting.

The Forum discussed possible locations for future meetings but **agreed** to leave the final decision on the venue for the next meeting with FCS.

**(Action: Forum Support Team)**

Finally, the Forum further **agreed** that the next public meeting of the Forum should take place around early December 2005, to coincide with the second public consultation period on the Scottish Forestry Strategy.