



## BETTER WOODLANDS FOR WALES STAKEHOLDER GROUP

**4<sup>th</sup> meeting on 24<sup>th</sup> October 2008**

Broneirion, Llandinam, Powys

### 1 Present

Andrew Bronwin	CLA
Meriel Robson	WEL
Dr Kathryn Roberts	CADW
Phil Johnson	CONFOR
Graham Heath	ICF
David Jenkins	Coed Cymru
Richard Siddons	FC Wales
Rachel Chamberlain	FC Wales
Patrick Green	FC Wales
Andrew Wright	FC Wales
Martyn Potton	FC Wales
Alison Evans	FC Wales

### 2 Apologies

Alan Starkey	FDD
Rosie Carmichael	WLGA
Daniel Rowland	SRD-PRD
Hilary Miller	CCW
David V Edwards	ICF
Kay Davies	RPD DRA&H
Daniel Rowlands	RPD DRA&H

### 3 Minutes/ Actions arising from the last meeting:

#### Accuracy required for digital maps



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Management planners have been concerned at digital maps being returned because of minor discrepancies and had asked for clarification.

MP explained that while FCW had the latest version of 'Mastermap', WAG was using an older version. WAG are undergoing a three year programme to update their mapping system but in the meantime software is being developed which will automatically run digital mapping data from the planners and produce a report which will highlight any discrepancy. Any differences will be fed back to Management Planners. The Technical services team need to highlight these differences and get confirmation from planners, rather than make assumptions on for example, legal boundaries.

The tolerances which FCW use needs to be the same tolerances as those used by WAG. **MP** is waiting for this information from WAG.

**GH** thought that there was a general lack of training and guidance for planners on using the GIS software.

- **Action MP** is to prepare and send out guidance to all Management Planners on how to use GIS software in preparing mapping information for BWW. (Early December).

## **Consolidation fees for mapping large complex plans:**

It was felt that £250 doesn't recognise the time taken to do large plans. The issue had been raised some time ago and had not yet been resolved.

- **Action:** Agreed to extend consolidation fees until March 2009. **PG**, together with the Technical group is to provide targets and action dates for a decision on consolidation fees.

## **Contract layout and provision of maps to applicants once plans are approved**

**DJ** asked what had resulted from the working group looking at improving the length, layout and complexity of the contract layout. **AW** said that a Request for Change (RFC) had been put in to restructure BWW contract, management plan reports and associated maps.

## **Charter times**

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**AW** reported that Citizen Charter Time changes will apply to new plans only from April 2009.

➤ **Action**

**RC** will ensure that Charter Times are published from the new financial year.

**GLOS downtime**

The GLOS system is now more stable which has resulted in downtime of 2 days a month. It can usually be scheduled, which allows FCW to give more warning to planners.

**PJ** agreed that stability was better but that there are still some glitches and slow refresh speeds.

➤ **Action MP** requested planners to report problems directly to him. This will allow FCW to identify problems and test the system.

**Technical Group**

**AB** felt that not enough feedback was coming through to the Technical Group and that the group should be more pro-active.

➤ **Action PG** to send out the Technical group agenda to MPs two weeks before the meeting and ask for their feedback. **AE** to publicise role of Technical group to Management planners through their technical newsletter. Role to identify problems and solutions. Also update Technical group web page. Minutes to be published to see what points are brought up at meetings and what action is taken. New management planners needed in group.

➤ **Action Technical group** to advertise vacancy (Nov 08).

**Improved Land Premium**

Information on ILP now published on BWW web site 'Approach to New Planting'

**Core habitat network and focal areas**

Query from **MR**, rules not available on the above. **PG** said information is now available on BWW reference library on the web-site.

➤ **Action AE** to contact **MR** and give her link to documentation (Approach to New Planting, updated October 2008).

**Historic environment**

CADW require guidance on the buffer between the boundary of SAMs and Historic Park and Gardens and the BWW boundary. **MP** said at present all SAMs and

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Historic P&Gs that are within 500 metres of a BWW case are included. In future FCW will be moving to a system where an independent buffer will be placed around the SAMS, rather than around the whole BWW case.

- **Action** KR to advise FCW on what distance this buffer should be. MP will follow up with CADW (end November). CADW to discuss their participation in BWW training for Woodland Officers.
- **Action** PG Meeting to be arranged with CADW (Feb 2008)

## Invasive species

The general principle of FCW is that seeding plants of all invasive species are removed from a site, CADW doesn't always want this to happen. KR asked for more flexibility of these rules.

- **Action RS** agreed. Further discussion needed. **AW** to agree with CADW some guidance on management of rhododendron and laurel in woodlands in historic parks and gardens by 1/2/09

## 4 Operational progress to date (including staffing)

### Staffing:

Rachel Chamberlain is now in post as Operations Manager. A new Woodland officer, Andy Wills will be working in mid Wales, replacing Stuart Gray, who will be working in the North West. An extra Technical Support Officer, Sam Millner is now in place at Clawdd Newydd. **AW** reported that a new County Analyst for BWW Adele Jordan will be in place at Silvan house. She will be working full time for BWW.

**AB** and **DJ** raised the issue of problems caused by a new Woodland officer coming into post. Issues that have been agreed once have to be re-agreed. **PG** agreed that there needed to be more consistency in standards.

### BWW progress

**MP** reported that demand for BWW remains strong with new areas being added into the scheme as Management Planners capacity continues to grow. As at September 2008 some 910 schemes have been mapped and their total area is 39,900ha. We have either spent or are committed to expenditure of £2.9 million out of a revised budget of £3.3 million. FCW are in negotiation with WAG for more budget if this proves necessary and will let the sector know the results.

- **Action RC** to write out to all agents and owners by 18 November 2008 with a request that FCW are informed of any operations that will not be done before

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the end of the financial year. Money can then be released to other plans from January 2009.

**GH** said the PRL1 process takes too long and is not financially worthwhile for planners. **PG** said that processes will be improved as the scheme moves forward. Any problems with BWW plans need to be sorted out at an early stage with the Woodland Officer. If the problem cannot be resolved between the planner and the Woodland officer, the issue should be forwarded to **PG**.

- **Action RC** to confirm and communicate new turnaround times to planners

## Annual revision of WIG cost calculator

First meeting 2<sup>nd</sup> January.

## Joint guidelines FCW and CCW on Habitat Regulations Assessment (HRA) of BWW applications

- **Action RC** to discuss and carry forward with CCW (November 2008)

## 5 G&L Online developments in 2008

**AW** explained that a Request for Change (RFC) could take up to 6 months to implement. This is due to:

- Work load
- Drops to GLOS are only made every 3 months.
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It was also felt that changes in GLOS are those that suit FCW and are of no advantage to owners and planners. **RS** agreed that changes have been mainly internal changes which have been a result of pressure to make regulatory changes. These should be finished in the next 2 drops i.e. 6 months

- **Action AE** to publish calendar of planned GLOS changes in the BWW Technical magazine (November issue and all subsequent issues).

## 6 Update on selection process

Figures for approved MPs and SAs:

MPs	76
PAWS	41

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CCF	18
ECOLOGY	29
COMMUNITY	9
VALUE ADDED	0

New applicants requiring training:

MPs	5
PAWS	2
ECOLGY	2

Applicants requiring field assessments:

PAWS	2
CCF	3
ECOLGY	2
COMMUNITY	2
VALUE ADDEDED	1

A new initiative to train assistants to management planners has received a very positive response, with 17 applicants so far. Update training for existing Management planners is organised for January 2009

➤ **Action AE** to organise MP assistant training for Spring 2009

MPs can only defer training twice and will then have to re-apply.  
Selection panel is looking for new sites to hold field assessments

## 7 Update on Paying Agency: Key issues from last S41 meeting

FCW was previously the paying agency used to claim EU co-finance. Due to devolution there was then a requirement for one paying agency per country. In Wales it is the Rural Payment Division (RPD). FCW is delegated to hold this budget and it has to report monthly to the RPD. There is an agreement for delegation to continue until the end of the RDP plan. RPD are able to impose some of their systems on to FCW, e.g. CRN numbers

The AXIS 2 review is out and stakeholders need to give their feedback to the review as it could have a big impact on forestry.

### Land registration

FCW Interim Guidance note to be published detailing how to fill in the forms to register and where to obtain them. Registration is owner's responsibility but

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owner can provide authorisation to the planner to act on their behalf. MP may wish to provide this service at additional cost to the applicant. Feedback to **RC** if Divisional Offices are turning down applications from agents

- **Action AE** to e-mail planners and stakeholders with published guidance (1/11/08).

## 8 Changes to BWW

### Cross checking

MP gave a presentation on this issue. Before BWW grants are paid out it is a legal requirement of the EU regulations that the BWW case is cross-checked against all other schemes grant aided under the RDP for Wales. The purpose is to make sure there is no double funding. MP illustrated potential cross check errors and how they are resolved. Woodlands have to be registered to pass cross checking.

- **Action MP** to write guidance on process **AE** to e-mail planners and stakeholders (Early December )
- **Inspections and penalties**  
FCW required to follow RDP rules. Decision to inspect will be risk based- high or low risk. 4% of inspections will be based on risk factors, 1% will be randomly selected by GLOS, this may change after analysis of results. New penalties will be implemented as part of the new inspections and penalties process.
- **Action PG** to produce guidance on BWW website. **AE** will inform planners and stakeholders when published. (End December 2008)

FCW will accept amendments if it is not possible to do 100% of work, so that a partial claim can be made. This will ensure that the customer is not in breach when a claim is submitted.

**Action PG** to update guidance on amendments **AE** to inform planners and stakeholders, (Early December).

### CRN interface AW

CRN bank details have to match those held by WAG

## 9 First Steps

Concern that BWW was too big a step for small woodland owners to take and that owners were not coming into management.

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Pilot scheme: 1<sup>st</sup> phase and 2<sup>nd</sup> phase (using BWW GLOS platform) administered by Coed Cymru.

**DJ** will get the report on the Coed Cymru pilot to FCW, followed by consultation. Target for developing outline of scheme April 2009, consultation May/June 2009, system to go live during 2009

## 10 AOB

**KR** Archaeological trusts need feedback on information they supply to the MPs. Is it too much/too little. How should it be presented?

➤ **Action MP** to set up mid term review with Trusts. Outcome to be fed to PG and Technical group ( 3 Feb 2009)

**GH Consolidation** fees/top up fees. Delays are costing MPs money (e.g. cross checking, CCW responses).

➤ **Action RC** will listen to problems on a case by case basis. In future these fees will go and will be built into the plan fees.

## 11 Date of next meeting

**1 May 2009**

**6 November 2009**