

Wales Squirrel Partnership Meeting

Anglesey Suite, Tre-Ysgawen Hall Hotel,
Capel Coch, Llangefni,
Isle of Anglesey

2pm Friday 28th October 2005

Minutes

Chairman: Dorian Moro
Minutes: Craig Shuttleworth

1. Welcome and introductions.

Dorian Moro [DM] welcomed everyone to the meeting. It was explained that this was the first meeting of the re-christened 'Wales Red Squirrel Partnership' which would give a voice to the public. Those in attendance were asked to introduce themselves.

Dorian Moro	Centre for Ecology & Hydrology
Craig Shuttleworth	Menter Môn
Martin Bailey	Friends of the Anglesey Red Squirrels
Steve Roberts	Anglesey Aluminium
Liz Halliwell	Countryside Council for Wales
Kate Williamson	Snowdonia National Park Authority
James Laing	Forestry Commission Wales
Nick Jackson	Welsh Mountain Zoo
Ann Hessian	Newborough Forest Preservation Group
Rita Farrall	Newborough Forest Preservation Group
Sarah Cartmel	Clocaenog squirrel projects/research
Raj Jones	Friends of the Anglesey Red Squirrels
David Alexander	Country Landowners Association
Geoff Radford	North Wales Wildlife Trust
Iolo Lloyd	Forestry Commission Wales
Hugh Knott	Menter Môn
Martin Gould	Forestry Commission Wales
Rob Ogden	Wildlife DNA Services

2. Apologies received prior to the meeting

Dawn Parry	Countryside Council for Wales
Neil Matthew	Countryside Council for Wales
Huw Denman	European Squirrel Initiative
Brenda Mayle	Forest Research
David Cowley	Anglesey Country Council
Chris Wynne	North Wales Wildlife Trust

Ruth Jenkins	Forestry Commission Wales
Chris Jones	Forest Research
Jon Cox	Esmé Kirby Snowdonia Trust,
Kate Burgess	Denbighshire Country Council
Isobel Machno	Carmarthanshire County Council
Wendy Joss	Forestry Commission Wales

3. Update from Wales Squirrel Forum

Liz Halliwell [**LH**] explained the background and development of the Wales Squirrel Partnership: An open meeting was held in November 2004 which produced a report and identified a number of possible options for the future structure and organisation of the Wales Squirrel Forum. This included a model with a large group that met annually for information exchange and a smaller group that met more regularly. LH consulted all those that attended the November 2004 meeting on the proposal for a Forum of this type and asked which group they saw their organisation as being involved in. The initial proposal was for two groups named the Wales Squirrel Forum (the larger group) and the Wales Squirrel Forum Working Group (the smaller group) with Task and Finish Groups undertaking specific projects. However, communication from a range of people indicated that these names were causing confusion and so it was proposed to change the names to the Wales Squirrel Partnership and the Wales Squirrel Forum. The functions of the two groups have stayed the same.

4a. Matters arising: - Terms of reference

[**Paper**] A copy of the third draft 'Terms of Reference' was distributed.

[**Paper**] Copies of the Minutes of the Working Group 27th June 05 were distributed.

[**Paper**] Copies of the Minutes of the Working Group 12th September 04 were distributed (these have yet to be ratified as accurate by the Working Group).

LH explained that the Forum had produced a 'Terms of Reference' document, had reviewed the Wales red squirrel BAP (Biodiversity Action Plan) targets and was about to begin developing a Wales Red Squirrel Strategy. The forum recognised that grey squirrels were a serious woodland pest, and although they would deal with this wide issue, they would particularly focus upon red squirrel conservation. The group were also considering the creation of a single Wales wide red squirrel project to package Clocaenog, Anglesey and Mid Wales together in order to try and secure large scale funding such as Heritage Lottery.

DM asked if the Terms of Reference was the most up to date version. **LH** said that it was indeed the third version, and that the forum no longer considered this as a draft. **DM** then told the partnership that the minutes of the forum 12th Sept had not been ratified and that there was still time for comments to be made by members of the wider partnership. **LH** then explained that the Terms of Reference set out the operation of the two Wales groups, their individual memberships, and how they operate. Sarah Cartmel [**SC**] raised the fact that Clocaenog research was not represented on the forum and that she would like to be

the representative for the area. **DM** stressed the importance of local groups being represented on the forum.

4b. Matters Arising – BAP Targets for Wales

[Paper] A copy of the Wales red squirrel BAP (2005) targets was distributed.

LH indicated that the targets for all UK BAPs were being revised with targets set at the regional level being combined to produce national (UK) targets. In Wales there are currently twenty 10km² where red squirrels have been recorded in the last 5 years. These have been broken down into confirmed and likely populations. This is now the baseline and the target will be to maintain these until 2010 / 2015. The need for more positive data on distribution was stated.

Iolo Lloyd [**IL**] raised the point that 10km² is a broad scale and that it did not accurately reflect the location of animals/populations or the actual area of habitat that they were reliant upon. **LH** replied that the 10km² scale was a national standard and that in Scotland, the red squirrel were often so geographically abundant that a finer scale would not be suitable. However, in Wales there was a clear need for an improvement in our knowledge of the species and how they are actually distributed on the ground.

James Laing [**JL**] drew the groups' attention to the fact that Forestry Commission Wales (FCW) needed a detailed scale map of the distribution of red squirrels in order to be able justify changes in management and the appropriate targeting of funds.

[**ACTION** James Laing and Liz Halliwell to refine the current distribution map]

IL Asked **LH** where did Wales fit in the national UK context, and how was it viewed by the UKRSG. **LH** outlined that the status of red squirrels was very different across England, Scotland and Wales, and the UKRSG wanted to keep red squirrels in all three countries. In a national context, the UKRSG saw Clocaenog as the best mainland site in Wales which could be defended in the long term. **JL** made the point that whilst other country-wide BAPs were expecting to lose red squirrel populations, in Wales the aim was to maintain what is currently present and therefore Wales may be more strategic. **DM** added that the creation of an open meeting such as this should also be seen as a significant step forward.

5. Regional red/grey squirrel updates

5a. Clocaenog

[**Paper**] Bryce, Cartmel and Quine - FC Information Note 2005 Habitat Use by Red and Grey Squirrels: Results of Two Recent Studies and Implications for Management was distributed

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Sarah Cartmel [SC] provided an update. Grey squirrel control had been concentrated upon since the summer of 2004. A network of hair tubes was now present throughout the forest and each individual tube was checked monthly to ascertain if grey squirrels were or had been present. 139 grey squirrels had been caught since August 04, with half caught this summer and early autumn. Grey squirrel presence was associated with food availability. This autumn fewer grey squirrels were moving into the forest and it was anticipated that this would reduce the pressure on the reds. Red squirrels were still being trapped and radio-tracking was being carried out in previously unmonitored areas of the forest. Monitoring of cone crops using transects was also still being carried out and had been now undertaken annually for over a decade.

IL then described how FCW use the cone crop data to try as a guide to the priority of grey squirrel trapping. In 2004, it had initially appeared that the cone crop would be good and so trapping began, however the crops were not quite as good as anticipated. Nevertheless, trapping was continued into 2005 when there was actually a good crop. It was pointed out that the forest is over 5,500 hectares in area and, with a low density of greys, logistical and financial factors are important in governing how much can be done.

DM asked if trapping success was good, or whether numbers of animals could remain uncaught. **IL** said that he believed the population was largely transient, opportunistic, and mobile. There were also large areas of woodland where cone crops were poor, even in good seed years, and this factor could be used to target work. **SC** added that although the greys move out of the forest when seed crops are poor, the reds seem to hang on by using fungi, flowers and buds. **IL** said that there was localised overlap and that GIS data could sometimes be misleading in determining potential presence as, once someone actually looked on the ground, they could find that a block marked as pure Sitka did in fact contain small amounts of other tree species and might contain reds.

Nick Jackson [**NJ**] raised the issue of squirrel pox virus and asked if they had any data on antibody prevalence in greys. **SC** said that the majority of greys caught had antibodies. Martin Bailey [**MB**] then asked if the reds and grey squirrels overlapped. **SC** said that they could do, but once the good seed sources disappeared, the greys moved away. It was however hard to say precisely how frequently this occurred, but in most years there would be at least some overlap. **MB** then asked if trapping of the greys was carried out. **IL** responded and said that this was dependent and limited by finances. **SC** added that areas known to have reds were trapped 2-3 times each year and that the greys were largely on the edge. **IL** said that work focussed upon areas based upon research and study and that that information allowed them to target areas and justify the expenditure.

KW asked if the Clocaenog red squirrel population was increasing or decreasing in distribution. **SC** said that management may make some areas unsuitable and hence the distribution would change. **KW** then asked if the hair tubes were reliable and if greys masked reds. **SC** stated that they seemed a good method of detecting greys and monitoring reds. Rob Ogden [**RO**] asked if the total number of squirrels was known and **SC** stated that the number of greys wasn't known for sure. **RO** then asked if any hair

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samples had been collected and if genetics were being used to try and identify individuals. **SC** replied that hair was collected but that it had not been used yet.

RO then outlined the potential value in having a method of collecting hair samples from individuals but that also kept individual samples separate. **LH** referred to studies looking to use DNA to gauge abundance of species and **RO** agreed, but stressed the necessity to have samples that were definitely from one source animal only.

DM enquired about management of the forest area. **IL** gave an overview of the management and design plans. 50% of the woodland is now continuous cover or low impact silvicultural systems. Restocking and under-planting with Norway spruce in particular was taking place. The species composition was aimed at keeping red squirrels. However there was always a careful balance between over thinning and the need to open the crop to facilitate regeneration of young trees.

LH asked if the future requirements for red squirrels could be outlined. **SC** said that this would be dependent upon budgets. **JL** noted that assuming the conservation work was working, and as long as the same or similar was done in the future, it would be possible to maintain the reds. However the FCW did have multi-purpose objectives and therefore continuity of management has been helpful.

DM asked if it would be possible to tell if something did go wrong. **IL** explained that the radio-tracking and cone crop monitoring was useful and that every five years an assessment was carried out. Cost of live trapping was prohibitive and restricted much of what would otherwise be desirable. However presence/absence was monitored and that was a good tool. **SC** added that in a few sites she had a population index based upon trapping, but there were problems due to the movements of animals. **IL** asked how do we monitor population viability. **DM** suggested that over the long term it would be possible to see beyond annual ups and downs and get a picture for the overall pattern of population change. **IL** indicated that the network of hair tubes may provide these data.

DM raised the issue that a single red squirrel sighting or animal would equate to a 10km² and suggested that there was a need to have a good handle on numbers so that we could react if necessary to any change. **IL** said that the cone crop monitoring in Clocaenog allowed managers to be proactive as they could predict the potential threat of grey invasion. **JL** said that presence/absence had been resolved for Mid-Wales and that FCW now needed to know about viability. The answer to this was required in order to decide upon future management and costs. **IL** said that at Clocaenog they had always aimed to manage the biggest area possible for red squirrels, this would allow a large population to be more viable, but also make it hard to monitor.

RJ asked if the monitoring of grey squirrels being carried out at Clocaenog as part of a wider scientific project was ever in conflict with red squirrel conservation. **SC** said it was not. **RJ** asked what was the title of the study that were being carried out, and if the data was ever published. **SC** said that the work was not research and was being carried out for the Forestry Commission. The only published material from this was the recent 2005

Forestry Commission Information Note. **IL** said that the work was aimed at identifying and generating information on grey squirrel hot spots.

5b. Mid-Wales

CS read out an update sent by Neil Matthew of CCW:

“Anna has produced her report and this should be generally available soon. Her work and the parallel work by Huw Denman and Phil Harries has given us a lot more info with the possibility that there is higher genetic diversity than in other parts of Wales. 30 odd red squirrels were captured in all.

Huw and Phil are now taking forward Phase 2 of the Species Challenge Fund survey (managed by Brecknock Wildlife Trust) and they will be targeting other areas of Tywi Forest and elsewhere if possible.

We have also funded Huw and Phil to trap out grey squirrels in one of our NNRs which is an upland oakwood next to Bryn Arau Duon where they had all their reds: this should help to reduce the number of greys getting into their conifer forest. We should aim to do a lot more grey trapping in these bridgehead areas.

For myself, I intend to take forward the formation of a local friends group and will be contacting Raj for assistance.”

LH gave a brief update and said that the current work was being carried out as part of a species challenge fund grant from CCW and that work would end in March. **MB** asked if any of the grey squirrels were positive for squirrel pox. **LH** confirmed that some were and said that she thought the figures were 50-60%. A surprisingly low number of greys had been caught and that where the red squirrels are present, the number of greys caught was relatively low. **KW** asked if there had been any problems catching animals. **LH & SC** said that there had been a delay of around six months but that 30 reds were caught and these were spread across different areas. **RO** then described the genetic work that had been carried out on red squirrels samples collected in Mid-Wales.

Three different mitochondrial types were identified from 17 samples. One was similar to that found in the wild population on Anglesey; one was similar to the Welsh type found in Clocaenog, whilst a third was similar to Anglesey but slightly different. **DM** asked how the samples compared with Clocaenog. **RO** said that Clocaenog had two haplotypes and Mid-Wales three, but small sample size should be borne in mind. Clocaenog has a Welsh type and also a haplotype which is closer to those found in England, whilst mid Wales and Anglesey are Welsh. **LH** asked if the second Anglesey type, now no longer found on the island was found in Mid-Wales. **RO** said it was not and it may have been lost from Wales for ever as it has not been found anywhere else. **RO** then outlined the fact that Wales has a squirrel type and that the genetic work has also covered the

reintroduction on Anglesey. **SC** asked where the genetics of the Anglesey reintroduction animals was from. **RO** said that they were diverse and included types found in the UK and Europe.

5c. Anglesey

Three papers were distributed:

[Paper] Oral Assembly Questions to the First Minister tabled on 08 June 2004 and for answer on 22 June 2004 – Glyn Davies (Mid and West Wales); What is his policy on the culling of grey squirrels to allow the survival of red squirrels. (OAQ36182) *This paper was distributed.*

[Paper] Amended minutes of the forty-seventh meeting of the Forestry Commission Advisory Committee for Wales held on Tuesday 24th June 2003 at Bodysgallen Hall, Llandudno – Discussion of fieldtrip to Newborough. *This paper was distributed.*

[Paper] Written questions answered by the Environment Minister between 7 and 14 October 2004 - Glyn Davies: What conditions have been attached to the sale of Pentraeth forest on Ynys Môn by Forestry Commission Wales to ensure that red squirrels are protected? (WAQ38168). *This paper was distributed.*

CS provided an update on the work on Anglesey. The reports from Mid-Wales and Clocaenog were extremely interesting and had illustrated that, like Anglesey, none of the Welsh populations were definitely secure, they all had vulnerabilities and that fact should be recognised. It was therefore important that this was conveyed to government and it was also important to avoid portraying one particular site or habitat as being more sustainable for reds than any other as in the minutes of the 47th FCW Advisory Group.

CS then outlined the work that had been going on within the island and the expansion of the red squirrel population following grey squirrel control. The uncertainty regarding the future ownership of Pentraeth forest was identified as of particular concern, and in that context **CS** stated that the latest BAP target to retain all the existing 10km² was a very encouraging step. The Wales Squirrel Forum should be applauded for taking such a bold step, but nevertheless the English BAP may be counterproductive even in Wales. It may be difficult to pursue politicians and funding bodies to support grey squirrel control on Anglesey when in England such broadleaf dominated habitats are being abandoned.

The removal of grey squirrels from the island was then outlined and **HK** stated that only a few hundred grey squirrels now remain. **CS** described how almost 500 grey squirrels were killed in Newborough during 2002 and said that this illustrated that not all coniferous habitat is bad for grey squirrels. In 2005 a small number of adult grey squirrels were trapped in Newborough and the last grey to be killed in Pentraeth was in 2003, and prior to that a single animal in 2001. This year, and for the first time, the project had access to a 50 hectare woodland on the island and had killed over 150 greys, whilst in the remaining 2,300 hectares only 350 adults and young were caught.

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The uncertain future for Newborough forest was described and the current CCW/FCW consultation outlined. A paper was then circulated within which the Welsh Assembly First Minister had stated that no tree felling would take place that threatened the survival of the red squirrel. **CS** suggested that this statement, and also the targets in the new Welsh red squirrel BAP, meant that FCW would have to create or maintain a woodland at Newborough that would support red squirrels.

SC asked if any red squirrels had come out of the forest. **CS** said that they had taken up residence in broadleaved stands immediately adjacent the site but were seldom recorded further a field and probably because of the isolation of Pentraeth. Red squirrels had been recorded on Cors Erddreiniog during 2003, but were not recorded since. **HK** added that in 2005 an adult red squirrel from Pentraeth was found dead on the road near Brynsiencyn some 5 miles from the forest. **CS** indicated that the reintroduction of red squirrels to Newborough had occurred because the problem of natural re-colonisation was identified. The return of red squirrels to the woodland had made landowners and the county council believe that red squirrels could be reinstated across Anglesey and that this had galvanised local support for the project.

KW asked if any thought had been given to future arrangements aimed at stopping grey squirrels from reinvading the island. **CS** said that up to date effort had concentrated upon the enemy within and but that eventually the issue would have to be tackled although John Ratcliffe of CCW had been looking into this. **KW** enquired if greys could get across the bridges or swim. **CS** said that they did but that numbers were thought to be low. **HK** added that once greys were eliminated, targeted trapping would have to take place in areas where the greys would be most likely to appear, particularly near the bridges.

CS said that eradication could only be achieved if grey squirrel presence could be accurately detected, and that it was a similar position to Clocaenog 5,500 hectares only that Anglesey is 720km² in area. **DM** suggested radio-tagging and releasing a captured grey squirrel and that this could give an insight into the difficulty involved in catching lone animals. **KW** said that public support for the project meant that local people would probably help by reporting grey squirrels that appeared, particularly if red squirrels become more abundant. **HK** agreed and said that the education pack had helped raise support for the project and that this would assist in getting political support for the work that was being carried out. **RJ** added that for the project to be sustainable, it was vital that local people were supportive and involved and that a visitor centre was desperately needed. **LH** supported the involvement of local people, and stressed the importance of the Mid-Wales project also fostering local support.

JL asked if future funding was secured and how important the deaths of several animals at Newborough had been. **CS** said he would deal with the latter part of the question and allow Hugh Knott to outline the funding situation. **CS** outlined the loss of three pairs of adults in the enclosures at Newborough during a four week period. The deaths were not due to squirrel pox and several animals showed similar symptoms including pneumonia and enteritis. Pathological tests had not revealed a specific cause but there was a suspicion that viral enteritis or another type of virus may have been involved. There was

no evidence of any bacterial infection of the gut or within any organs. The loss of several juveniles was associated with the adult deaths but it seemed likely that some background 'natural' mortality was also present with one death in particular associated with heavy endoparasite load, although in the opinion of the pathologist this was secondary to some other problem. **SC** asked how long the animals had been in the cages. **CS** said that most had been present for over two years.

DM asked what were was the main aim of the project. **HK** said that the aim was to clear the island of grey squirrels and facilitate the re-colonisation of red squirrels. However, although there remained the viable option of simply defending Newborough and Pentraeth and abandoning grey squirrel control elsewhere, this was not being considered at the moment.

5d. Holy Island

Steve Roberts [**SR**] provided background information about the Riotinto corporation and the Anglesey Aluminium Plant near Holyhead, Holy island. The company had commissioned Kehoe consultants to produce a management plan for their farmland and woodland holdings. A large part of the land is on a capped landfill site and the entire area is monitored by both the company and also Environment Agency. Tony Roberts from the Environment Agency had first put forward the idea of introducing red squirrels in 2001, and the agency raised the idea again early in 2005. The proposal was supported by the Countryside Council for Wales who are on the Anglesey Aluminium Environmental Panel. Craig Shuttleworth [**CS**] visited the site and confirmed that the habitat was suitable for red squirrels and that the area was clear of grey squirrels, in fact they had never previously been recorded on the site.

SR explained that during the summer 05, two enclosures were built and furnished ready for the arrival of the red squirrels. The first four animals had arrived about two weeks ago and four more were being obtained. The public had not been informed about the work and the introduction would be low profile for the foreseeable future.

SC asked where the four squirrels are coming from. **CS** replied that they were being ordered from an importer and that he charged £250 a pair. **SC** asked if the animals were bred in captivity or caught from the wild in Europe. **CS** explained that the source was a well known mammal and bird importer who dealt in a range of exotic species, the red squirrels were a product of captive breeding aimed at producing specific 'homozygous' colour morphs. **SC** then asked if the Welsh Mountain Zoo was still breeding squirrels. **NJ** **NJ** replied that they were and that the Newborough project was mainly using captive bred stock from the captive breeding scheme, although a couple of Cumbrian animals, taken under license prior to clear felling, were also used. **Rob Ogden** [**RO**] then referred to a recent genetic conference where the issue of IUCN guidelines was raised in relation to the release of animals into the UK, he asked if these were available. **LH** said that they were widely available and **NJ** added that the Anglesey reintroduction project had taken full account of these, in concert with advice from CCW and Dr Robert Kenward.

IL asked if only eight animals were going to be used and what would happen if it went wrong, would more animals be used. **CS** said that there were no plans to use any more animals and that if the introduction failed it would not be repeated.

5e. Elsewhere

IL reported that NWWT were carrying out hair tube work in Corwen and that a recent red squirrel sighting had been recorded in the last few months. **NJ** emphasised the importance of the captive breeding programme in Wales which was being carried out by both zoos and private breeders.

6. Research Updates.

[**Paper**] A précis of current research projects involving squirrels had been prepared by Brenda Mayle [**BM**] and was distributed.

DM referred the group to the document produced by Forest Research and it was agreed that it was self explanatory. **DM** asked if anyone had anything in particular that they would like to raise. **NJ** asked if the 'Reproductive Inhibitor Project' was building upon the earlier work by Harry Moore at Sheffield. **LH** said that this was a totally different approach which, because of the non-specific nature of the compound, required the development of delivery hoppers which were specific to grey squirrels.

7. Community involvement and local support for grey squirrel control

LH stressed the importance for mid-Wales of getting local people involved. **DM** asked if the Anglesey Aluminium project had or would foster local involvement. **SR** said that schools were already involved and one of these had produced a nest box for the squirrels. The company were looking at installing cameras at feeders in the forest in order for visitors and staff in the plant to be able to watch live via a video-feed.

8. Grant aid and habitat management within FCW holdings and private woodlands.

CS said that he had spoken with Richard Pow of Forestry Commission in Northumberland where grant aid for red squirrels is available:

WIG - up to 80% for capital costs

AMG - 50% Labour on agreed projects

The grants must obviously be for projects that are sound in forestry terms but that also offer public benefit and or biodiversity benefits. Grey squirrel control is part of a two pronged strategy including habitat management in Northumberland. **CS** had spoken with FCW staff arranged to have a meeting with FCW to explore the availability and extent of

grant aid under the 'Better woodlands for Wales scheme' for private woodlands and land where FCW are tenants. **JL** said that there was also scope within FCW for discussion focussed upon funding work within Forestry Commission Wales holdings.

IL said that his Forest District were looking at a landscape scale Objective 1 partnership funding to control grey squirrels around Clocaenog forest and within a network of broadleaved sites. However, if, such funding was available it would be specific to the site and more than likely also a one off payment.

[**ACTION** CS to meet with FCW]

9. Joint meeting between Wales Squirrel 'Group' and the UKRSG

CS explained that Melanie Hardy of the Joint Nature Conservation Committee (JNCC) had written asking for the minutes of this meeting so that they could be put on the JNCC web-site. Her email was read out to the group. Those in attendance agreed that the minutes should be made available. Melanie had also mentioned that UKRSG would welcome having a joint meeting with the Wales Squirrel Forum.

There was some confusion as to whether this referred to the 'partnership' or the 'forum' as the partnership had originally been called the forum until the working group, now the forum, opted to change the names of the two bodies.

DM asked if the email had been sent in reference to this particular meeting. **CS** said that it had been correspondence associated with this pending meeting and that he believed that the UKRSG would benefit from meeting with the partnership, and that it did after all also contain everyone who attended the forum meetings. **SC** then said that the partnership was not the right group for the UKRSG to meet and that it was not the correct level, the UKRSG should meet the Wales Squirrel Forum because it was dealing with technical issues. **CS** then stated that there was a very real danger that people would become or feel marginalised if the UKRSG only met with the WSF and that he didn't wish a repeat of the situation when the original Wales Forum [1998-2002] excluded people from attending and getting involved. The Partnership was an inclusive, dynamic and representative body and that as such everyone would benefit from meeting the UKRSG. **DM** asked if anyone felt strongly that the UKRSG should not meet with the partnership. The consensus was that it should, but the issue of the recent name change was still felt to be an issue.

Geoff Radford [**GR**] said that the names were confusing and were indeed likely to cause confusion in the future because they did not accurately reflect or describe the function or remit of either group. He felt that the partnership was an open 'forum' where individuals and groups could come together and discuss issues, and that it would be better to call it this, whilst what is now the forum should revert back to the original title of working group or technical working group. **GR** then gave illustrations of other similar 'forum' and 'working' groups which the Wildlife Trust were involved with. **RJ** echoed the need for a name change and that members of the public must be able to influence policy and that the

‘partnership’ sounded exclusive and may be off-putting. **CS** agreed with **GR** and felt that the Technical working group should readopt its original title, whilst the forum should be open and inclusive. **DM** referred everyone to the Terms of Reference document recently produced by the forum, and said that there is flexibility and that, as the author, **LH** should be informed of views expressed at the meeting.

[**ACTION DM** to raise the ‘name’ issue at the next meeting of the WSF]

10. Future funding for red squirrel conservation in Wales

(This agenda point was brought forward in the meeting as **LH** had to leave at 4.30.)

DM raised the question of planning ahead for continuity of future red squirrel conservation and grey squirrel control and stressed the importance of forward progression. Is it possible to identify future funds? Kate Williamson [**KW**] referred to the potential difficulties and the time involved with juggling lots of small pots of money and grant applications, and said that in the long-term large grant applications such as Heritage Lottery were best. **JL** then said that by definition, FCW were continually putting in significant amounts of money annually across Wales, and that this ‘core-funding’ would be in the background relative to any large bids such as Heritage Lottery. FCW funding would also be available to match-fund any large additional grants. **LH** suggested that the modular approach to funding should continue, but that ‘big-pots’ should also be sought. **DM** offered the view that collaborative applications would have a better chance of success than unilateral bids and highlighted the range of groups present as offering such a collaborative group.

KW asked if it was envisaged that the forum would lead on bids or if it would just advise. **LH** said that the forum would take any lead role in Heritage Lottery Bid. **JL** then asked if this would not be a good subject for a Task and Finish Group to deal with. **LH** agreed that it would and that such a body would need people with fund raising experience such as Hugh Knott [**HK**]. **HK** indicated that the new BAP made it easier to approach funding bodies because the twenty 10km² were clearly defined units. He also explained about another source of funding; Corporation tax bonds. **LH** then gave the illustration of the Wales Bat Officer post, which was part funded by money received from a private individual. **RJ** felt that FC and CCW should draw down more money from the Welsh Assembly Government and that this was a role that they were well placed to fulfil. **LH** sated that CCW has priority species and other areas of work to fund and that the corporate planning process did not make it possible to approach WAG in this manner. **KW** indicated that there may be additional funding available through education orientated grants and these can sometimes cover up to 80% of costs. **RJ** suggested that the Aggregate Fund might have potential and that on Anglesey she was having constructive talks with HSBC.

11. Any other business

DM asked if those in attendance felt that the flow of information between the forum and the partnership had been sufficient. The consensus was that it had. **DM** added that there was plenty of time for people to respond to anything dealt with by the WSF before the next meeting in December.

The chairman then thanked Dr Raj Jones and the Friends of the Anglesey Red Squirrels for hosting the meeting.

12. Date of the next meeting

JL suggested that the next meeting be held in Mid-Wales, soon after the final report was available. **CS** said that it would be valuable to have the meeting at either Clocaenog or Mid-Wales. **IL** felt that there was not a necessity to have meetings near the various red squirrel populations, but that a central point might be a helpful alternative to minimise travel. He added that if Mid-Wales were unable to host a meeting then he would be willing to organise something somewhere else.