

Wales Biodiversity Partnership Woodland Ecosystem Group

27th January 2010,
William Davies Hall - Ibers Aberystwyth University

Attendees

Chris Tucker – Forestry Commission Wales - Chair
Lynda Makepeace – Dept for Rural Affairs - LM
Chris Smith – Snowdonia National Park - CS
Jerry Langford – Woodland Trust – JL WL
David Jenkins – Coed Cymru - DJ
Nigel Ajax Lewis – Wildlife Trust South & West Wales - NAL
Jim Latham – Countryside Council for Wales – JL
Reg Thorpe – RSPB - RT
Richard Jones – CCW - RJ
Celia Thomas – Pembrokeshire National Park - CT
Sarah Mellor – The National Trust - SM
Jane Holloway – FCW – minutes

1. Introduction & Apologies

Chris Tucker – Chair opened the 2nd meeting of the group.

Apologies

Richard Crompton – Wales Mammal Group (Bat Conservation)
Dr Emma Durward - Powys County Council
Trevor Dines – Plantlife Wales

2. Minutes of last meeting

Group agreed minutes from first meeting.

Update on Action points from last meeting

- Helen Buckingham – not approached yet Chair due to meet her and will discuss then.
- Terms of Reference for group, no comments sent.
- Targets sent
- BWW feed back later on agenda
- Jim Latham – AWI report (using 1800 maps that are not digital) – will send out details again. CCW/FCW Joint project revision of Ancient Woodland Inventory – which FCW Management board and CCW Council have approved. Project will start with tender process over next 2 months.

Future agenda item on this project, Planner could be invited to next meeting – Celia Thomas will ask Vicky Hurst head of planning with Pembrokeshire National Park, DJ says to ask from urban area etc.

Guidance has to be checked at present – some of this information is digital, but not info on buffer zones.

- Terms of reference – this info needs to be passed to the Policy group.
- Is it Possible to have a joint meeting with Policy Group on this topic?

Action Point

Chair to send terms of reference/spec on this, to group, confirm project plan with Jim Latham and FCW Evidence manager
Jim to present on this project at next meeting
Chair to discuss joint meeting with Policy group

Survey information

Reg Thorpe - RSPB survey on SSSI bird features of woodland birds report commission by CCW, not sure if this will be made public.

Local Authority's surveys

NFI – 5yr survey GB wide – include condition of woodland, species diversity, structural diversity. 1500 plots in Wales. Will start next year until 2014 across GB. Terms and specifications to be shared with the group

Action Point

Jerry Langford to send link to National Trust publication
Chair to send NFI terms and specs to group once confirmed

Action Point – completed see below

WAG are monitoring Tir Gofal – awarded 3 contracts (3 yr. contract) – Lynda Makepeace to send info to group.

'Woodland' is one of the TG monitored habitats. There is a method. Involves 1/4 ha samples recording performance indicator 'attributes' such as canopy cover, presence of desirables/undesirables (inc. alien invaders like Rhododendrons, Prunus laurocerasi, amounts of dead wood (standing and fallen) etc. 1A, 1B & 1C prescriptions are monitored the same. No controls for either TG or TC and TC is only rudimentary 'is the habitat still there' kind of monitoring, as the controls issue was only flagged after surveys had started.

Action Point – 8 from last meeting – Completed – sent out to group Feb 2010

Condition assessment paper still to be sent by Chair

Red Squirrel plan gone to Minister and has been approved. This is now progressing.

Species group – some actions being taken forward, awaiting map

3. Matters Arising

4. Group roles – LBAP Contact Officer

Emma Durwood – hoping she will do this – awaiting confirmation
Chair has spoken with Emma who has kindly agreed to take on this role

BARS editor
Nigel Ajax-Lewis

5. Targets

Wales baseline figure for native woodland in 2006 target review is 24300 ha – due to more recent analysis work on NIWT this figure has changed, at present trying to get this figure revised in the targets.

Need to get BRIG approval for new figure, which is 109500 ha

Reason why figure changed is more non-native in areas.

The target for Ancient woodland restoration is also liable to change once AWI review is completed.

Action Point

Chair to get a definitive list of what the targets are and which of the figures will change after baseline is changed and AWI figures produced

Group had discussion on Native woodland/ wood pasture - see bullet points

- If we are going to report on condition how much detail?
- Woodland creation – over the last 25 yrs. Change in planting
- Group could look at wood pasture / Quality of woodland
- FCW only look at - NVC classification of woodland (BWW) – management of LBAP species.

We can give guidance for species. Look at Glastir

Level of detail – LBAP has local detail. Top down prescriptions and the condition on ground do not match.

Scotland has split up areas and has clear links/zones – level of detail clear.

Group felt that Wales is still not clear with regards to detail and what is reported against. Structure in Wales - zoning priority areas for Species. – upland group producing maps on bogs/peat maps. We can try and produce similar things – CCW work is a start and is already being used.

The group can give guidance on what, strategically, is important in each area?

Is it common across Wales? – LBAP look at own area only.

Have LBAP's worked over the last 20 Years?

National Policy needs to support a Regional approach

If LBAPs are not working then how do we to progress this? – Should Chair take this forward to the Policy Group?

Look at funding mechanism – grant systems, based on number of trees you plant and not on biodiversity.

Jim Latham to produce map for next meeting Native woodland layers to give guidance to LBAP's etc priority habitat / regional areas, Reg Thorpe to also link into this.

What we would like to do with these sites?

What incentives are available to achieve this?

Maps are not the whole solution (JL WT) – direction guidance criteria – table sent to group in January. Expansion target – landowners will create woodlands for own purposes.

- Is the group happy with categories?
- Are there any additional targets?
- How do you define condition?
- Continuity of woodlands?

- Zoning?
- Climate factor, should be pragmatic taking into account culture issues, species issues etc

Action Point - Group

Targets – Group to send 4 targets to Jane Holloway by end of February.
Targets will be then be collated and sent to group for discussion.

Action Point - Chair

- Chair to send out work done on section 42 list completed 2 years ago.
- Chair to speak to Stephen Bladwell who is on the Species group
- Chair to look at grant aid regarding Paws sites – speak to G&R re: incentives about restocking on Paws - Chair to look at what will happen with BWB on sites over 51% condition etc
- Chair Paper from Keith Kirby to be circulated - Target will measure condition
- Chair Papers from Broneirion Native woodland Hap targets

Continuing PAWS restoration – outside of public forest is not happening- should we give a target for the private section? How can we help achieve/uptake of Paws restoration. By 2030 looking at 3rd of area, CCF conifer regeneration as well as broadleaf. Wording of target? Once woodland has achieved over 50% - NAL says to increase to 75% - site assessment – threat levels? Condition is site by site basis
Danger that Management Planners could be planning 49% conifers and 51% Ash, condition on grant-aid?

Discussion on Expansion target – points below

- HoV
- Lapwing
- Woodland Trust campaigning for larger expansion (including hedgerow/ trees not just plantation. Woodland for Wales woodland creation. 350 ha a year 8000 ha by 2025.
- Read report
- WfW targets
- RSPB where is new woodland going?
- Could give guidance on where new woodland should go
- What is achievable? Depends on resources? Simplified process for grants?
- Transferable asset

Action Point

Jerry Langford – To circulate paper to group

Targets for Species

Tree species need to be discussed, which are favoured – special tree list – some are on the 42 list. Trees outside of woodlands

- Do we have targets?
- Trees beyond woodland.
- Urban trees.

Policy Issues

To promote to Policy group

1. No Loss Target - Reporting loss of woodlands and how can we get planning authority report, some authorities are better than others when reporting.

Neath / Port Talbot report annually to less than 5 cubic metres.

Community strategy loss – some report annually.

Aerial imagery – illegal felled – remote sensing – GIS/ (LiDar)– BAP targets

- Need to report woodlands loss through Planning process and woodlands lost illegally.

- Loss of Ancient woodland AWI and loss of general woodland –including scrub?

AGREED TO TAKE TO POLICY GROUP

2. BWW processes – Interpretation of woodland habitat network maps and definitions.

- Small scale work for biodiversity not funded well, – so no point doing!

- Management Planners that goes to owner is clear – not delivering long-term planning. This group needs to build up a list of issues and take straight to FCW.

- Also BWW Website has links that do not work and it needs looking at.

- Should BWW be flag to Policy group?

It was agreed to pursue these issues directly with FCW in the first instance and then progress to WBP Policy group if no satisfactory response received.

FLAG TO POLICY GROUP AS POTENTIAL ISSUE FOR THEM

- What do BWW monitor?

3. Climate change – including effect on biodiversity and ecosystem services provided by woodlands.

WEG issues – all to comment on LUCCG report when circulated

Action Point

Chair - LUCCG report – is Clive Thomas happy to circulate the latest version draft report to the group?

4. Bring unmanaged woodland into Sustainable Management

- Right management in the right place

- Top line priorities – types of management

WEG issues to include in targets and action plan of this group

5. Grants – First steps and Glastir

- DJ – look at Scottish system.

- JL – have workshop on schemes – CCW/FCW have been asked to look at these.

- Need to be Easy for landowners to plant trees and do small areas of woodland management, flexible management payments

- Project managers to help guide application and implementation of grants etc

POLICY GROUP ISSUE

6. Habitat creation and restoration – woodland or other

- Need to get some criteria from the Policy group – not just plantation but native woodland and individual trees

POLICY GROUP ISSUE.

Woodland Trust – do not use BARS as they feel there is duplication. (JL WT)

BWW must not affect other semi-natural Habitats. Invite someone from BWW to attend a future meeting and supply him or her with a list of questions for them to come along and discuss.

Sites are not being monitored – this should be reported to Policy Group (CCW's work on SACs and SSSIs) Need more monitoring, need more than just grants, monitor targets, expansion target, - monitor a number of key sites to get good data.

Action Point

Chair to speak to other group Chairs on what /how to take forward monitoring.

7. Invasive Non native policy (CS)

WEG issue (see table sent since meeting for liaison with INNS group)

8. Markets for wood – not for Policy group

Speak to Chris Edwards – WFBP

Has there been an increase in felling licences? – Chair believes no.

DJ – target species which we should be planting

Deadwood/firewood is an issue.

WEG issue

Pollution – not for Policy group

Right woodland in correct place.

How woodland can help/stop pollution.

Good forest management practice – already guidelines – encouraging people to follow them.

WEG issue

Restoration of Red Squirrels on Gower – Not for Policy Group

WAG – FCW are developing strategy

Restore all ancient woodlands – 1 of top 5 issues – speak to BWW first, if no action then speak to Policy Group. May is deadline for next policy group meeting

Make recommendations to FCW regarding BWW grants to restore all ancient woodlands,

Need to discuss Bio-security – FR – Hugh Evans – possible agenda topic/guest?

Top 5 issues to Policy group only.

Action All – confirm the issues to be raised at the policy group as set out in table below.

Chair will then pass them on.

Table of Policy Issues

	Issue	Suggested Action
1	No loss of woodland target is difficult to measure as there is no co-ordinated recording of woodland lost through Planning process or illegally.	Through Planning guidance ensure all woodland loss is reported to FCW.
2	Grants – Glastir and BWW First steps – these need to make it easy for landowners to plant trees and carry out woodland management. Project officers to help in making applications and implement plans is best way of making grant scheme effective.	Policy group to pursue this with Glastir scheme designers.
3	Habitat creation/expansion. There will be a demand for land to expand habitats onto. Potential conflict	Policy Group to provide criteria or guidance for

	between native habitats.	Ecosystem groups on targeting land for habitat expansion.
4	Restoration of Ancient Woodlands. Outside the public estate how can we incentivise restoration of PAWS? WEG will speak to FCW in first instance but there may be a need for help from Policy group. Revision of the AWI will have implications beyond woodland managers.	Invitation from WEG for a joint meeting with the Policy group regarding the AWI revision and how wider govt, national and local, are made aware of the implications.
5	Various issues of BWW not incentivising biodiversity action well enough.	Being taken up with FCW directly so raising Policy groups awareness to this potential issue of response from FCW not satisfactory

4. Action Plan

Ecosystems actions spreadsheet to be filled in

How many years does the action plan cover for WfW – 5 years

Action Point All

Complete table with actions for the group and send to Jane Holloway. – Action Template sent out prior to this meeting. Chair will collate the actions and prepare final draft for next meeting.

5. Small Woods grant scheme

Part of BWW – less than 20ha smallest is .25ha – rates of grant are same as full BWW scheme.

Management planner comes out, designed to be done within 3 months.

Some issues regarding mapping that are slowing down process.

Not necessary to put whole woodlands in, you can have 2 small areas of woodland as long as they are not over 20ha in total.

First Steps – out for stakeholder consultation at present. Simpler scheme, 2 pilot schemes at present via Coed Cymru.

19th February is deadline for consultation.

Focus on key area – grant schemes

6. AOB

7. DONM

4th May 2010 at Ibers – William Davies Room 10am – 3.30