

# Inaugural meeting of the Wales Biodiversity Partnership Woodland Ecosystem Group

21st April 2009,  
Countryside Council for Wales Ladywell House Newtown

## Attendees

Chris Tucker – Forestry Commission Wales - Chair  
Richard Crompton – Wales Mammal Group (Bat Conservation) - RC  
Lynda Makepeace – Dept for Rural Affairs - LM  
Liz Halliwell – Countryside Council for Wales - LH  
Lewis Winks – Centre for Alternative Technology -LW  
Chris Smith – Snowdonia National Park - CS  
Jerry Langford – Woodland Trust - JL  
David Jenkins – Coed Cymru - DJ  
Nigel Ajax Lewis – Wildlife Trust South & West Wales - NAL  
Jim Latham – Countryside Council for Wales – JM/CCW  
Dave Lamacraft - RSPB Cymru - DL  
Jane Holloway – FCW – minutes

## Apologies

Reg Thorpe - RSPB  
Sheila Spence - Gwent Fungus Group  
Celia Thomas – Pembrokeshire National Park  
Kath McNulty - ConFor  
Peter Jennings – Dwr Cymru  
Sarah Miller – The National Trust  
Sian Whithead - CCW  
Trevor Dines – Plantlife Wales

Bryn Griffith – Gwynedd County Council (possible new member)

## 1. Introductions

Chris Tucker – Chair opened the meeting and asked all present to introduce themselves and what they wish to gain from the group.

## 2. Group Membership – Should anyone else be included?

Email Chris Tucker with other anyone else who should be included in this group.

## 3. Terms of Reference – See Delivery of UK Biodiversity Priority Habitats and Species in Wales appendix 1 (II) attached

These groups will bring together habitat and relevant associated species interests at Wales Level. They will largely be made up of experts from relevant organisations, NGOs and LBAPs, and will be charged with driving the delivery of priority habitat targets including those associated with relevant species by identifying and, where appropriate, carrying out the most important actions required by the group as a whole.

Chris Smith (CS) – is it in our remit to set targets? – Chair - yes we can set targets but we have to incorporate existing targets as well.

We can also say if we think targets are achievable, or if they need to be reassessed.

CS requested that the targets be circulated to the group. There is a lot of confusion on targets, we need a definition on what targets mean, what definition of woodlands are we working to? Wood Pastures/hedgerows/parklands etc?

Lewis Winks (LW) – concerned about not applying targets to farm woodlands, Chair agreed that we should also look at this as well. LW asked about Biomass crops that could be on farmed woodland.

David Jenkins (DJ) – managed woodland – Coppice

Jerry Langford (JL) – feels that we need to look at the whole of the resource –

A lot of species sit in many environments and how will this be done?

We will speak about this with regards to the Species Group.

JL - explained that he was asking for some of the groups should be joined, this is on going.

Chair – the structure has been under debate for over a year – this needs to be raised at steering group level. If we have specific issues then the chair of this group and the group under discussion need to get together and discuss this. The Chairs of all groups meet BI-annually.

Richard Crompton (RC) asked - If we feel there is issues within woodland then we should not feel restrained to just this group?

Chair feels this is fine.

DJ – 124k hectares of Native Woodland. – Does not state what the condition is? Chair – no it does not – Wales target for 2015 is 35k in favourable condition – DJ feels that we already have reached this target and it should be revised.

Dave Lamacraft (DL) - How is the favourable condition set?

Jim Latham (JL/CCW) – we have never had a co-ordinated response –we need to identify what is required where.

Chair Moved on to what The Ecosystem Groups will be asked to do:

1. Drive the delivery of habitat and species targets
  - Set objectives/targets (incorporating existing SMART targets) for the habitat and relevant species, at the Wales and LBAP level.
  - Review existing marine targets, and set targets at the Wales and LBAP level.
  - Prioritise the most urgent and important actions to meet the collective needs of the habitats and species within the overall group.
  - **Change Instigate** to Promote monitoring to enable reporting against progress towards habitat and species targets.

DL – not sure that organisations on the group are able to provide the monitoring, due to lack of resources and funding.

DJ – feels that we should have sites that should be monitored especially with regard to climate change.

We need to monitor our targets

We need to monitor conditions.

Nigel Ajax Lewis (NAL) if we have a maintenance target/ if we are talking about woodlands loss, we should get Local Authorities to report woodland loss etc –

DJ - NIWT will only pick up on loss 0 years later due to its timescale. NIWT may report that totals are positive but was the originally loss better then what was replanted.

There are reports /monitoring been completed this information needs to be collated

- Identify opportunities for leveraging resources and co-ordinate bids for research or implementation.

Chair – Everyone needs to take this onboard

- Identify priority areas for delivering biodiversity enhancements and improving connectivity at a landscape and seascape scale.

JL/CCW - CCW doing physical work on this at present – Modelling work done with FCW – this needs to be continually updated but it is not complete and more work is needed.

- Further develop ecosystem approach, taking into account ecosystem services and carrying capacity.

This refers to not looking at individual sites or species – but looking at large areas and objectives – e.g. what planting of a woodlands can do to improve water /slow down flooding/ wet woodland etc

- Engage appropriately with local partnerships to align delivery.
- Provide advice on habitat management for land managers.

The group can feed into this process and influence for example FCW Policy.

DJ – suggested that we have 2 issue –

- Regulations & grant aid
- Advice

Felling licences & SSSI

LW - feels that a 3<sup>rd</sup> issue is Education – not targeted but into sections e.g. stewardship over the land – Forest schools etc – if the bottom falls out of the funding what is left? How will things develop?

DL - feels we all give advice, but this is not always consistent, so should our co-ordinated advice on Habitat Management?

DJ – is this achievable?

DL – not sure but feels this is an important point.

We need to influence those people on the ground who give advice – steer people – identify areas that we can agree on.

2. Liaise with other relevant ecosystem groups where joint approaches could be beneficial.
3. Identify knowledge gaps and either address these directly, or recommend to the WBP how they could be filled.
4. Identify policy blockages and, through representation to the Policy Group, help drive policy development and monitor outcomes.

BWW process – group would like update

5. Co-ordinate reporting for habitats and associated species
  - Identify a member of the group to lead on reporting.
  - Use the Biodiversity Action Reporting System (BARS) to report against actions and targets and share information with partners including LBAP Partnerships;

RC - Are we represented on BARS? Some of group is concerned as several organisations represented on this group – how do we report and monitor this? Chair is meeting with Juliet ..... from BARS soon to discuss this point.

- Liaise with Lead Partners for UK species reporting.

6. Provide representation to any over-arching UK habitat group established by the UK Biodiversity Standing Committee.

JL/CCW is on UK Native Woods Group and is happy to also represent this group, along with Chris Tucker who is also on the group.

UK woodland & Pasture group – ask Helen Buckingham to represent for this group.

Action Point – Chris Tucker

Chair to ask Helen Buckingham to represent group on UK Woodland & Pasture Group

Action Point – All

- If you have any areas that you would like to expand on with the Terms of Reference, please send them to Jane Holloway – [jane.holloway@forestry.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:jane.holloway@forestry.gsi.gov.uk) these will then be circulate to the group.

### Action Points – Chris Tucker

- Send Targets & Outcomes and monitoring information from Action Reporting pages to group
- Provide details of the new process for BWW (Chris to speak to Rachel Chamberlain and report back)

Chris Smith (CS) asked what the process was for feedback on BWW – Chair has no problem going back with suggestions on blockages there maybe etc. He will make representation to the Policy Group if required.

BWW has a database - What is reported/monitored?

#### 4. Habitat actions/targets

Native Woodland – (a few years ago there was a Native woodland policy advice group – FCW lead – CCW/ Wildlife Trust etc) Outcome was definitions and basis of targets these are now on the website. – Chair read out the terms agreed See appendix 1.

Link to UKBAP website <http://www.ukbap.org.uk/>

CS said that we should not limit the Biodiversity

Ancient woodland / Native woodland

BAP Target – Maintain the net extent of native woodlands in the UK – in England it is 80%.

RC feels that we should run with the definition we have and only change if we run into problems.

JL/CCW - Ancient Woodland Inventory – CCW/FCW & Woodland Trust are investigating 1800 EPOC Maps – these are now digital images and can be drawn out for NIWT. Pilot study completed by FCW/CCW, (FCW Funded pilot scheme) linking NIWT2 – mapping of PAWS or Semi Natural Woodland – results indicate an increase of AWI by around 10%.

Recommendation from this group that the full study is now carried out by the Forestry Commission Wales, this was agreed by the group.

### Action Point – Jim Latham

Jim Latham to circulate the report to the group

Condition / favourable condition

Woodland SAC

BWW grant scheme

Countryside survey undertaken every 10 years

### Action Point – All

What surveys are being undertaken at present?

Please send details to Jane Holloway to co-ordinate a list.

Role of this group is to inform the decisions for the planning system.

JL/CCW says - maybe we should think about what is the condition across the region.

DJ feels it should be on a site by site basis.

Lynda Makepeace (LM) - Site monitoring should be left to the organisation/funding body/ maybe we should look at a target for monitoring. Should also look at threats

**Action Point – Chris Tucker**

**Chair to send out paper on Condition assessment – for group to comment on**

Targets and any additional ones

5. Species - sign-posting

Wales Mammal group – regional group – Richard Crompton

Wales Mammal BAP group being set-up at present – Jean Matthews - CCW

Chair showed WBP draft mammals target and actions spreadsheet – Liz Halliwell (LH) explained the spreadsheet to the group. – We will get documents like this from the various groups, we need to then feedback on these documents and build this into our thinking when looking at actions and targets.

Chair explained that this group has some input on the Species group; The Species group will identify key outcomes and will then go to the Habitat groups to prioritising the priorities.

Sign-posting of S42 list is being undertaken. Section 42 - 547 species for Wales

FCW have completed this task and found over 200 had an association to woodlands.

- Red Squirrel Conservation Plan

Existing work going on in Wales, how do we go about incorporating their work together, this was looked at during the Wales Squirrel Partnership.

LH gave an update from the meeting, and discussed the draft Red Squirrel Conservation Plan. Liz would this group to look at the draft.

**Action Point – Liz Halliwell**

**Send out draft Red Squirrel Conservation Plan to group for comments**

Grey squirrel control would benefit many species not just Red Squirrels & woodlands as a whole.

DL - we can probably influence a lot of woodlands in Wales due to the representatives of the group.

Chair suggests that - Species that are extremely rare, this should be passed down for local level for action LBAP or local Ecologist or FD. And then species that are on S42 list that are decreasing these should be priorities, some that are a lower priority, we should go to the Species expert group to get guidance, or we will end up getting all 547 species.

JL - Wider issues – higher-level threats to biodiversity – pollution/climate

**Action Point – Chris Tucker**

**Ask for a map showing species from Species Group, showing local issues that can be taken up by local management (LBAP).**

## 6. Key Policy Drivers

What are our 5 key policy drivers? Gains for woodland biodiversity?

- Responding to Climate Change
- Increasing woodland biodiversity
- Bring unmanaged woodland into sustainable management
- Good grant schemes – spatially targeted - simplifying the process – target grants & incentives – opened to all – encouraging people in zones who have not applied
- Habitat creation & restoration - woodland or other. (JL)
- Monitoring
- BWW Monitored
- Markets for wood – Hardwood/softwood/fuel wood
- Pollution
- Restoration of Red Squirrels on the Gower (DJ)
- Restore all ancient woodlands (JL)

JL explained - UKWAS standard – certified woodland owners, the auditor will raise questions. E.G. how do you conform to LBAP etc, they ask the question and if response is suitable then that is OK

## 7. Contact with LBAPs

Bryn Griffiths – Gwynedd County Council (North Wales)

Who will represent South Wales?

Who would like to be our contact with LBAPs?

Action Point – Chris Tucker

Chair to discuss with Bryn Griffiths

## 8. Climate Change – to be discussed again

The Flood Risk Management Research Consortium has produced a report on Pontbren, this can be found at the link below

[http://www.floodrisk.org.uk/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=48&Itemid=50](http://www.floodrisk.org.uk/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=48&Itemid=50)

## 9. Any other business

Website for group? WBP site? CAT site?

For next agenda

Wood Pasture & Parkland

Veteran Trees

Requests for Woodlands for Wales Strategy – please contact Jane Holloway with address and number of copies required. Or download pdf from link below

<http://www.forestry.gov.uk/forestry/INFD-7GDE7A>

## 10. Date of Next Meeting

Demand lead for meetings

Next meeting in October

Not Monday or Fridays or 6<sup>th</sup> & 7<sup>th</sup> or not w/c 26<sup>th</sup>

Appendix 1

T1 Maintain the net extent of native woodland in the UK, (no net loss of 1,000 kha).  
 [shared target for all priority woodlands]

Target type	Maintaining extent	Units	Hectares		
Target values (2005 values represent the baselines)					
Country	2005	2010	2015	2020	2030
<b>UK</b>	1058721	1058721			
<b>E</b>	535000	535000			
<b>NI</b>	8380	8380			
<b>S</b>	391000	391000			
<b>W</b>	124341	124341			

Additional information

Definitions and basis of targets: The working definition for native woodland will be: Woodland where at least 80% of the canopy comprises species that are suited to the site and are within their natural range, taking into account both history and future climate change. Definitions of what constitutes native woodlands in the HAP resource are found in FCS Guidance Note 20. All 7 native woodland HAPs have been combined into one set of generic native woodland targets. This reflects the fact that on the ground there is a dynamic continuum between woodland types. The setting of targets for individual types was deemed unrealistically precise, too complex and unduly prescriptive. However, this will not dilute the emphasis placed on nativeness and on achieving the right type of woodland for each individual site. See details for individual countries below: ENGLAND: The total area of existing native woodland is approximately 535,000 ha (area of broadleaved woodland given in NIWT). This comprises the following categories: 200,000 ha of ASNW (average of several AWI and NIWT figures: 193 - 205 kha); 284,000 ha of non-ancient semi-natural woodland (>80% broadleaved); 51,000 ha of broadleaved (or restored) PAWS (from NIWT data on PAWS); Although the basic target for non-ancient woodland only requires gains to exceed losses, it will be necessary to monitor the following aspects: • the level of flux and rate of change in native woodland area; • the change to other priority habitats rather than to other land use (with an aim of 'no net loss of semi-natural habitat'); • likely considerable interchange between native woodland and wood pasture HAP; • the area of woodland as patches or dynamic areas within other habitats. SCOTLAND: The total area of existing native woodland is approximately 391,000 ha. This comprises the following categories: 178,000 ha of ASNW (147kha broadleaves/31kha native pinewoods); 212,000 ha of planted area (62kha broadleaves/150 native pinewoods). Target equates to no net change in the existing area (no net loss). WALES: The total area of existing native woodland is approximately 124,300 ha. Target values assume that all native woodland (semi-natural and planted) will be maintained. The policy emphasis should be on preventing the loss of existing native woodland. There should be a presumption that loss should be negligible and only tolerated where there is a significant public benefit. NORTHERN IRELAND: N.I. Biodiversity Group published native woodland action plans in March 2005. Further details can be found at the following website address: [www.ehsni.gov.uk/natural/biodiversity/hap\\_ni.shtml](http://www.ehsni.gov.uk/natural/biodiversity/hap_ni.shtml).

Monitoring information

ENGLAND: NIWT digital maps; ODPM land use statistics and Woodland trust woods under threat data. Grant schemes and inventories will need to record sufficient detail to allow estimation of the status of individual woodland HAP types for reporting at a UK level. WALES: The extent of native woodland will be measured via the FC National Inventory of Woodland and Trees. 1995-1999 NIWT did not fully measure native woodlands but an estimate could be made. NIWT 2 (proposed for 2005/6) should measure the extent of native woodlands, but estimates will not be available for each native woodland type in Wales due to sample size. Frequency: 5-10 years

## T2

Maintain the current extent and distribution of ancient semi-natural woodland, which qualifies as native woodland in the UK, (no change in the existing area of 403 kha). [shared target for all priority woodlands]

Target type	Maintaining extent	Units	Hectares
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### Target values (2005 values represent the baselines)

Country	2005	2010	2015	2020	2030
UK	403400	403400			
E	251000	251000			
NI		tbc			
S	118000	118000			
W	34400	34400			

### Additional information

The total area of native woodland in the UK is approx 1, 055,000 ha (400,000 hs of ancient semi-natural woodland). Target equates to no change in the existing area (no loss of ASNW). ENGLAND: The total area of ancient woodland which qualifies as native woodland is thus 251,000 ha; and the total area of other native woodland is 284,000 ha. The total area of PAWS is 140,000 ha but only 50,000 ha currently qualifies as native woodland. SCOTLAND: Native species should form at least 80% of the canopy cover and the resource should include both semi-natural and planted woods. The total area of existing native woodland is approximately 391,000 ha. This comprises the following categories: 178,000 ha of ASNW (147kha broadleaves/31kha native pinewoods); 212,000 ha of planted area (62kha broadleaves/150 native pinewoods). Target equates to no change in the existing area (no loss of ASNW).

### Monitoring information

ENGLAND: NIWT digital maps; ODPM land use statistics and Woodland trust woods under threat data. SCOTLAND: Update baseline with Scottish Native Woodlands Survey (SNWS). The mechanism for updating this will be through the Scottish Native Woodland Inventory and / or NIWT2 etc.



### T3

Achieve favourable or recovering condition of 565.7 kha (53%) of native woodland resource in the UK, by 2015. [shared target for all priority woodlands]

Target type	Achieving condition	Units	Hectares
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### Target values (2005 values represent the baselines)

Country	2005	2010	2015	2020	2030
UK		496650	565780	599660	617420
E		350000	375000	400000	400000
NI		tbc	5250	5250	5250
S		120000	150000	150000	150000
W		26650	35530	44410	62170

### Additional information

ENGLAND: Meeting this target would initially require improving an average of 1% of the native woodland resource i.e. about 5300 ha each year. More precisely, it means initiating work each year in 5300 ha which will, in time, result in the site reaching favourable condition. Probably as big a task will be continuing the work in areas which are in 'recovering' condition. SCOTLAND: Target of 6,000ha per annum to be brought into management over the period to 2015, based on a long-term aspiration is to have 240k ha in favourable condition by 2030. This will require an additional area of 6k ha/yr to be managed to improved condition. These are based on assumptions of 100% for designated sites and ASNW, 80% for other semi-natural woodlands and 60% for planted examples (40% for pine plantations) to be favourable (or unfavourable but recovering) in ecological terms by 2030. The lower rate for planted woods recognises that many planted (mainly) native woods will continue to be created and managed primarily for other objectives and will not necessarily be expected to reach good condition in biodiversity terms. The 40% rate for pine reflects the more commercial nature of pine plantations. WALES: Target refers to all native woodland i.e. >=50% native tree species in the canopy. Target will measure condition as described in Keith Kirby's paper: 'Condition Assessment for Native Woodland HAP purposes'. It includes a number of measures of condition including tree and shrub composition, ground flora, woodland structure (e.g. number of vertical 'layers', open space, deadwood), regeneration potential, and retention of cultural boundaries and features. Areas will be referred to as 'native woodland'. Condition will be favourable or unfavourable. Target values assume that 50% of all native woodland will be in favourable condition by 2030. Linear increase by year for illustration.

### Monitoring information

ENGLAND: NIWT sample square data; supplemented by other specific surveys. SCOTLAND: Future restoration progress will be recorded through FC databases for private woodland and the national forest estate. WALES: The condition assessment suggested in 'Condition Assessment for Native Woodland HAP purposes' will be carried out within the National Inventory of Woodland and Trees in Future versions. It should be possible to estimate condition from NIWT 1995-1999. Frequency: 5-10 years

## T4

Restore 50.3 kha of non-native plantations on ancient woodland sites (PAWS) to native woodland in the UK by 2015. [shared target for all priority woodlands]

### Target type

Restoration Units Hectares

Target values (2005 values represent the baselines)

Country	2005	2010	2015	2020	2030
UK		26880	50330	82555	85020
E		19000	36000	67000	67000
NI		180	420	420	420
S		4000	9000	9000	9000
W		3700	4910	6135	8600

### Additional information

ENGLAND: By 2020 85% of existing PAWS will fall into one of the following categories: already broadleaved, fully restored, under restoration or being actively conserved. Meeting the restoration targets will require felling and restocking around 1000 ha p.a. and thinning around 3000 ha p.a. An additional target for 2020 is for a further 14 kha of the coniferous or mixed PAWS resource to be managed in a manner that conserves and enhances biodiversity.

SCOTLAND: Target equates to 1000ha per annum between 2006-2015, to be brought into restoration from non-native PAWS (Plantation on Ancient Woodland Sites). This is based on a long-term aspirational goal of 70% of non-native PAWS (approximately 25,000ha) to be fully restored to native woodland by 2050 with 15,000ha to be achieved by 2030. 1) restoration achieved when non-native PAWS sites are fully restored to native woodland composition and no further major action needed (=fav./unfav recovering). 2) area in progress can be recorded as milestone area reaching over 50% site native (=part of the total HAP resource), and/or as started (area in plan intended for restoration).

WALES: The restoration target will only apply to Plantations on Ancient Woodland Sites where there is less than 50% native species in the canopy. Once a PAWS has more than 50% native species in the canopy it will be considered to be restored and will form part of the native woodland resource, although it may still be in unfavourable condition. Target values assume that 50% of all non-native PAWS sites will have completed the restoration process by 2030. Area of non-native PAWS: 17,177 ha.

### Monitoring information

ENGLAND: NIWT aerial photographs, EWGS and FE databases.

SCOTLAND: Future restoration progress will be recorded through FC databases for private woodland and the national forest estate.

WALES: The condition assessment suggested in 'Condition Assessment for Native Woodland HAP purposes' will be carried out within the National Inventory of Woodland and Trees in Future versions. Condition assessment of a sample of PAWS sites should give us suitable information on condition. It should be possible to estimate condition from NIWT 1995-1999. Given the long nature of restoration it is hoped that extra data sources will be available in future (via surveys on Assembly woodlands PAWS sites and via GLADE for non-Assembly woodlands). Frequency: 5-10 years

## T5

Expand the current native woodland resource in the UK by 134.5 kha, by 2015. [shared target for all priority woodlands]

Target type	Expansion	Units	Hectares	
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Target values (2005 values represent the baselines)

Country	2005	2010	2015	2020	2030
UK		83555	134559	162625	164755
E		26000	53000	80000	80000
NI		400	840	840	840
S		53955	76455	76455	76455
W		3200	4264	5330	7460

### Additional information

ENGLAND: Target equates to increasing the area of broadleaved woodland by 5300 ha (1%) per annum. Such woodland needs to be created in locations where it will enhance existing native woodland, particularly ancient woods, and other priority habitats. This will be achieved by: • buffering the margins of woodland or other habitats; • expanding small woods; • complementing and diversifying the age structure of even-aged woods; • contributing to habitat networks and 'ecological connections' across landscapes; • developing clusters of interconnected woodland; • creating some large new woods. SCOTLAND: Target equates to 4,000 ha/yr of new native-woodland planting together with a further 500 ha/yr. of conversion in Scotland for the period 2006 to 2015. (An additional 400ha/yr will come from PAWS restoration but is counted under the restoration target). These figures are based on an assumption of 9-10k ha/yr. total woodland expansion and an aspiration to increase the overall proportion of native woodlands towards 35% of woodland cover by the mid century. The long- term future target for expansion of native woodlands needs to be set in the context of the Scottish Forestry Strategy's overall vision for woodland expansion. Our aim in setting future targets should be to expand the native woodland resource of each priority type in ways which reduce fragmentation and build resilient forest habitat networks, developed around strengthened core areas of asnw and restored ancient woods. All expansion must comply with Forest Habitat Network principles. WALES: Target refers to areas which are not currently woodland. Target will show that new native woodland has been successfully established on a currently unwooded site. Once established such woodlands will be referred to as 'New Native Woodland' and can be in favourable or unfavourable condition. Target values assume that an area of unwooded ground equivalent to 3% of the 1995 area of native woodland will have had new native woodland successfully established upon it by 2030.

### Monitoring information

ENGLAND: NIWT aerial photographs and WGS database. SCOTLAND: Future expansion progress will be recorded through FC databases for private woodland and the national forest estate. WALES: In Assembly woodlands currently very little expansion of woodland takes place on open ground. In non-Assembly woodlands could use the payment of the second grant after successful establishment of woodlands. Frequency: annual. In future will also require condition measure of these new woodlands which could be captured in NIWT. Frequency: 5-10 years.