

3rd July 2008 – Working Group Meeting Notes

Wales Community Woodland Association: Decisions and outcomes of working group meeting

Working Group of the Wales Community Woodland Association

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Decision to create: **Wales Community Woodland Association**

An association of community woodland groups run by and for the groups.

Aims of the Association:

1. To promote and represent community woodland groups in Wales
2. To provide assistance and support to local community woodland groups and initiatives

Objectives (see Appendix 1 for expanded notes):

- Networking . among community woodland groups
- Networking with other groups and agencies, nationally and internationally
- Raising profile of woodlands with wider community
- Policy engagement
- Development of practice and sharing knowledge and skills
- Access to income through collaboration

Association membership: There will be two categories of membership:

1. **Full (voting) members** who are community-led groups involved in managing or using a local woodland (one group one vote . i.e. one voting representative, however many attendees from that group at the AGM).
2. **Associate (non-voting) members** which are groups, individuals or other organisations who support the aims and objectives of the association and wish to benefit from membership.

A decision on charging a membership fee is to be decided at the first AGM.

The first AGM should be held within the coming 18 months.

Decisions taken:

- Needs a constitution . Action point: Coed Lleol to research and draft . most likely based on the model provided by the Charities Commission for an unincorporated association
- Association will have an executive committee selected at AGM by members . 2/3 of committee should be full members of the association, associate members may stand for election and members or non-members may be co-opted onto committee.
- The attendees at the Machynlleth meeting comprises a working group which will lead the development of the association until such a time as an executive

committee will be elected by an AGM. Open invite for other members to join this working group.

- The working group will make decisions by consensus, with an option to vote (1 person 1 vote) if decision cannot be reached by consensus
- The working group extends a continuing open invitation to individuals involved in community woodlands who wish to attend meetings and get involved
- We will actively recruit members for the. We need to be proactive on recruiting Welsh-speaking members.
- We should promote the Association at events during the summer including the Royal Welsh Show, National Eisteddfod and woodland festivals such as Powis Woodfest and Woodfair if possible.

Results of further discussions:

Policy engagement: what do we mean?

1. Engagement with various policy mechanisms with a bearing on woodlands and their use by local people
2. Promoting a growing understanding of the value of community involvement in woodland management, to all relevant sectors.
3. Engagement with FCW on woodland management practice in Wales.

Points to note:

- Relationship with FCW is key
- Wider context of WAG, RDP, planning permission, L.A.s, councils, local plans is also relevant
- We should focus on woodlands but in the context of wider community land ownership/management issues which covers other land as well as forestry
- We should focus on community needs (including in context of sustainability localisation/transition philosophy)
- There is a possible need to engage with policy issues quickly, even before the association is properly established.

What Coed Lleol can offer the Association:

Coed Lleol has raised money to support the development and establishment of a forum for community woodlands over the next two years, which will take the form of a Community Woodland Association for Wales. As part of this project we can offer to fund:

- 2 part time staff whose focus over next two years is to help with establishment of a national representative body for community woodland groups
- Networking events: 2 regional (this year) plus 1 national annually (2 altogether?). National event could be a 2 day conference.
- Website . lists of woodland events & training opportunities, contact list of woodland groups and woodland folk discussion forum & notice board
- Provision of information . access to research reports and other publications, notices of new books, journal articles etc.
- Logistics for meetings of the WCWA working group including invitation to SCWA to attend meeting
- Costs of study tour to Scotland / attendance at Scottish Community Woodland Conference

Action points for coming months

Summer

- logo
- constitutions . drafts to be prepared by Coed Lleol and circulated to working group
- leaflet . ASAP for shows & events
- Presence at: Royal Welsh Show, Eisteddfod (August), Powis Woodfair was discussed. It may be too late to get our own stalls but we will investigate options for sharing space with others such as WT/FCW/CCW.
- Request initiation for WCWA to be formal consultee on revision of Woodland Strategy revision . offer WCWA services to reach other groups and to grass-roots level
- Follow up opportunity to provide comments to WCVA concerning development of WAG policy on transfer of rural assets to communities

Autumn/Winter

- Early September? Meeting with Scotland CWA representative (advice on policy consultation as well as on establishing the association.
- Regional meetings . North Wales (Autumn?) and south east Wales (early 2009?)
- Online database with links of useful sites, and contact details for groups, launched.
- Community woodland conference in spring 2009. Maybe include festival? Or have festival separately? Or presence at other people's festivals? To be discussed.

Working Group Meeting Notes: Purpose and Aims

Networking – among community woodland groups

- Exchange of and sharing experiences
- Networking to get ideas and support
- Help to facilitate the setting up of more community woodland groups and improve communication internally and externally.
- One forum for the whole of Wales . one voice.
- To bring woodland communities together for fun, support skills shares and dancing
- Sharing of resources, possibly joint marketing

Networking with other groups and agencies, nationally and internationally

- Establish links with other national groups in the UK and overseas
- Improve awareness among key personnel of FCW, CCW, Woodland Trust, and other organisations relevant to our aims and objectives

Raising profile of woodlands with wider community

- Raise profile of community woodlands in Wales . for volunteers, local people and tourists
- Increase engagement with civil society
- Advertise exemplar woodlands to the public
- Help establish new community woodland groups

Policy engagement

- To influence forest policy and planning policy on how and why our woodlands are managed.
- Political muscle to get change.
- Stronger voice with bodies such as FCW when working together . opportunity to influence policy.
- Represent community interests to WAG
- A collective voice for community woodland groups.
- Help community woodland groups working on FCW land to achieve their objectives
- Help establish new community woodland groups on FCW land.
- Full consultation . needs of community.
- Oversight of delivery of social objectives in forest policy
- A combined voice for advocacy and support for projects

Development of practice and sharing knowledge and skills

- Raise overall standards
- Improve woodland management practice
- Apprenticeship training with FCW etc
- Woodlands as a resource for timber, wood, wildlife, amenity and education . forum to promote above items
- Access to information and help
- Sharing experience and knowledge
- Acquire specialist expertise
- Help establish new community woodland groups

Access to income through collaboration

- Joint funding bids
- Share marketing ideas and perhaps create combined labels for products
- Sharing of resources, equipment, skills
- Collaboration not competition
- Promotion of and support for enterprise development