



Wales Land Management Forum (WLMF)

Minutes

Title of meeting: Wales Land Management Forum (WLMF)

Location: Skype Call

Date of Meeting: 13th December 2019

Present:

Zoe Henderson (NRW Board Member & WLMF Chairperson)

Rachel Lewis-Davies (NFU Cymru)

Hedd Pugh (NFU Cymru)

Dennis Matheson (Tenant Farmers Association)

Marc Williams (NRW)

Martyn Evans (Head of South West Wales Operations, NRW)

Anthony Geddes (Confor)

Geri Mills (Secretariat, NRW)

Ruth Jenkins (Head of Natural Resource Management Policy)

Sarah Hetherington (NRW)

Sally Tansey

Geraint Davies (NRW Board Member)

Chris Blake (NRW Board Member)

Elliott Rillie (CLA)

Additional Attendees Present:

Dominic Driver (head of Land Stewardship, NRW) up to and including item 5 only

Russell De'Ath (NRW) item 7

Clive Walmsley (NRW) item 8

Secretariat:

Marc Williams (WLMF Agri-Pollution Co-ordinator, NRW)

Apologies:

Meinir Wigley (NRW)

Tim Kirk (Confor)

Sian Thomas (Young Farmers Association)

Bob Vaughan (Sustainable Land Farming & Forest Manager, NRW)

Item 1 Introductions, Apologies and Declaration of Interest

1. Zoe Henderson welcomed all to the meeting noting apologies and explaining that due commitments of meeting attendees a decision had been made to hold a short skype call to update members ahead of a full meeting in February.
2. No declarations of interest were raised in respect of Agenda items to be considered.

Item 2 Minutes from the last meeting and any matters arising

3. There were no amendments to the minutes of the last meeting and agreed to publishing on the WLMF webpage on the NRW website.

Item 3 WLMF Governance

4. The Chair confirmed a meeting had been held between herself and Emyr Williams recently. The Chair concluded that the meeting had presented an excellent opportunity to share and gain knowledge on the respective organisations.
5. The Chair confirmed that NRW is currently recruiting to a Head of Customer and Commercial role with the NRW Board keen that this role reviews and develops collaborative communication.

Item 4 Role of Woodland Creation on the WGWE

6. Dominic Driver sought the views of the Forum on the role of the NRW in respect of land acquisition for woodland creation in relation to the climate emergency. Dominic confirmed that there is a mandate for around 350 hectares per year to compensate for woodland removed for wind farm development. Dominic suggested a scale of acquisition of around 1,000 hectares in the next 5 years to work as a starting point.

7. The forum highlighted the challenges currently in place for woodland creation, NFU confirmed that farmers are willing to engage in small planting projects, but this will need to be supported by RDP grant.
8. Ruth Jenkins acknowledged the concerns raised and highlighted that the challenge is around climate change with everyone needing to support changes.
9. The Forum went on to discuss the impacts of large-scale afforestation on communities and the Welsh language with the NFU confirming that farmers are keen to plant trees with the right support and in the right location in Wales.
10. Denis Matheson explained that challenges around tree planting for tenant farmers.
11. NFU acknowledged the climate emergency and highlighted that the burden on decarbonisation cannot fall unequally on rural communities and farmers. NFU went on to highlight its own net zero vision and supported an approach of collaborative working between the Farming Unions and NRW to explore woodland creation options.
12. Dominic Driver noted the concerns from the Forum agreeing to pick up discussions with individuals out with the meeting.

Item 5 Science and Innovation Strategy

13. Dominic Driver outlined his desire to involve the Forum in the refresh of the Strategy with Welsh Government leading the refresh on behalf of GB. Dominic highlighted that Stakeholder events will be held during January or February by Welsh Government and encouraged stakeholder engagement.

AP December 01: Secretariat to share the slides with the Group for information.

Item 6 NRW Update

14. **General Licences:** Ruth Jenkins confirmed that a review to licencing will be undertaken in 2020, the review will work with stakeholders. General Licences currently in place which are due to run out the end of December 2019 will be rolled forward pending the review.
15. **Woodland Creation:** Ruth Jenkins confirmed NRW is seeking to work with all stakeholders to identify issues and opportunities. NRW will also continue to work with land owners if WG allocate additional public money to support woodland creation as a public good.
16. **Grants Programme:** NRW has reviewed the grant mechanism in place which funds others. Ruth explained that there may be an option to work with the group via an MOU in the future to fund projects in a joint approach. Martyn Evans confirmed that this would also present an opportunity for the Heads of Place to engage focusing on delivering with NRW or on behalf of NRW.
17. **Access reform consultation:** will be presented back to the group to ensure a collaborative approach.

18. **Water Regulations:** Ruth Jenkins confirmed that NRW has been working closely with Welsh Government over the past months to understand issues and opportunities, also noting the importance of work from the Agri Sub Group.
19. Denis Matheson highlighted a need to review the funding of the Dairy Project and officers, Ruth reassured that NRW is looking to secure resources into the project.

Item 7 Area Statement Update

20. Russell De'Ath joined the meeting and confirmed that the current focused work of the team is to develop internet pages which will be published before the end of March. The Team continue to encourage more people to engage with the development of regional area statements.
21. Russell noted that the event held on 4th October had been well represented with stakeholders.

AP December 02: Russell De'Ath to share notes from the session with the Forum.

22. Russell concluded that several events had been held with details of the Mid Wales event to be shared with Forum members.
23. Russell summarised questions from the 4th October event:
1. Are we able to use Area Statements to pursue Agri funding, informing schemes – this would require input from local farmers
 2. Can Welsh Government feed into the policy – confirmed that NRW and WG continue to work together
 3. How we could use the process to gather data – NRW continues to explore this option
 4. How to reach farmers – continue with outward conversations
 5. Keen to write a briefing note – Russell sought a volunteer from the group to support with the development of a briefing note. To be completed January/early February.

CLA and Confor volunteered to engage on the development of a briefing note. Russell confirmed that he would re-engage with the full forum ahead of publishing on the internet.

24. Reviewing the outstanding actions Russell clarified that each geographical area of the Area Statement teams is planning and designing their engagement process based on existing networks and developing individual internet pages to supply information to interested parties. The Chair suggested that Russell shares with the group a high-level overview of functions and contact details for each of the area statement teams.

AP December 03: Russell summarise the roles and contact details for each of the Area Statement teams and share with the Forum.

Item 8 NRW Climate Emergency Plan

25. Clive Walmsley joined the meeting explaining that the purpose of the slot was to provide the Forum with an introduction to NRW's plan which had been discussed at a recent NRW Board Meeting. Clive confirmed that a climate change emergency was declared by Welsh Government on 30th April 2019. Clive explained that following discussions within the organisation NRW had decided not to declare an emergency but to work towards the call for action raised by Welsh Government. NRW has subsequently developed a top 10 15 areas of work in response to the Climate Emergency.
26. Clive confirmed that NRW had attended the UK Net Zero summit meeting with all the nature consideration and forestry agencies. Working with these groups NRW is looking for common positions whilst recognising the important role that peatland and habitat have in getting to net zero.
27. Clive explained that an internal NRW meeting of the Wales Restoration Programme will be held shortly in response to the request from WG to develop a programme. Clive confirmed that at that meeting there will be discussions around stakeholder collaboration.
28. The Chair noted the update and welcomed Clive back to the February Forum meeting to engage with and update the group further.

Item 9 NRW Land Management Skills Forum

29. Sally Tansey confirmed that NRW is currently reviewing the skills and competencies in the land management sector. Sally explained that within NRW changes in structures and staffing as part of the Organisation Design programme now required the review for NRW to deliver its agenda. This is due to land management posts now being held by individuals without skills and competencies, limited management experience to provide training and a desire to extract external candidates to fill vacant posts.
30. NRW needs to develop a clear picture of the skills and competencies required for future delivery. Sally confirmed that she is working with colleagues from Learning and Development along with liaison with colleagues in ICT and Confor. An initial exercise is being scoped for contract management and supervision grades which Dominic Driver will be responsible for.
31. Sally confirmed that moving forward there will be an apprenticeship scheme between level 2 and level 6. Sally welcomed members of the forum to contact her if they wished to receive any further information.

Item 10 Update from FUW/NFU/Confor/TFA/YFC

32. Denis Matheson confirmed that the Agri Bill will come forward shortly which will include amendments to tenancy law.
33. CLA confirmed that the replacement for Rebecca Williams will be announced in the following week.

Item 11 Fora Updates

34. Forum noted updates from Fora circulated with meeting papers.

Item 12 Details of Next Meeting

35. Next meeting confirmed as Monday 10th February 2020 in Aberystwyth.

Item 13 AOB

36. Marc Williams highlighted the Challenges and Choices consultation which is due to close 22nd December 2019.

Close meeting