

**West Midlands Woodland & Forestry Forum
SOCIAL FORESTRY TASK GROUP**

**10.00am 5th June 2009
Forestry Commission, Worcester**

1 Welcome & Introductions

In Attendance: Rebecca Banks (Rba), Ros Burnley (RB), Gareth Meadows (GM), Clare Neale (CN), Angela North (AN), Sara Roberts (SR), Katherine Sanford (KS), Laura Stewart (LS), Judy Walker (JWk) Simon West (SW)

Apologies: Ferdinand Addo, Janet Armstrong, Katie Eastaugh, Ian Egginton-Metters, Clare Fildes, Caroline Harrison, Justin Milward, John Winterbourne.

Welcome to Katherine Sanford, student placement at GroundworkWM, who has been engaged in compiling the Good Practice Guide. Welcome to Angela North, Network leader for the Diploma in Environmental and Land-based Studies at Warwickshire College and her colleagues, Gareth Meadows and Laura Stewart.

2 Actions from last meeting

Action Point 3.3 – JWk to discussed how to progress pilot with Bill Heslegrave. John Winterbourne (JW) has been tasked to develop a Social Forestry WIG. Like the Health WIG it will be flexible in terms of what it may include. JW will produce a paper of initial thought to share with the task group. It is expected to be part of the business plan from 2010-11 and beyond, for three-year funding commencing 2011-12.

Action Point 3.4 – Invite Brian Kedward to next meeting **CARRIED FORWARD – AP 2.1 (GA)**

Action Point 3.5 – RB to circulate list of consortia/priority areas
AN updated task group. Three consortia from 2009 – two in Worcester, 1 in North Walford and Shropshire. 2010 whole raft of consortia, though not many in Herefordshire. Consortia are positively led in Worcestershire and Warwickshire. Relationships with schools and colleges in Herefordshire are not as positive at this time. Rod Baston will be running in 2010. Consortia in Staffordshire not known. Gateway 4 for 2011 delivery in September. AN can find out Director of Herefordshire Consortia.

*ACTION POINT 2.2 – JWk to discuss Holme Lacy involvement with Robert
Dunn* **JWk**

Action Point 3.6 – JWk has yet to make enquiries with colleges to see if part of consortia, including those not providing ELBDs, but might wish to **CARRIED FORWARD AP2.3 (JWk)**

Action Point 3.7- Item covered by action 3.3

Action Point 3.8 – GA to provide funding overview from EWGS monitoring spreadsheet **CARRIED FORWARD AP2.4 (GA)**

Action Point 3.9 – JW provided SW with a document to illustrate grants already funding some social forestry projects.

ACTION POINT 2.5 – circulate JW grant document with minutes **GA**

Action Point 4.1 - RBa queried putting together a case study from a FoM education project, as funding for this has been cut. The Education Inclusion Project will end at

the end of this year. CARRIED FORWARD – *to include financial problems AP 2.6 (Rba)*

Action Point 4.2– covered under agenda item 6.

Action Point 5.1 - questionnaire on training provision circulated to task group.

ACTION POINT 2.7 - CN to find out how much response came from forestry in the West Midlands **CN**

3 Funding through Future Funding

JWk had discussion about Green Jobs Fund last week with Dept of Work and Pensions. It is appropriate to those social forestry projects offering employment, and FC is working with SWA to develop a programme to offer £6500 to project which offer employment for six months at 24 hours per week. FC nationally, in partnership with SWA, will be submitting a bid to this fund. JWk and Andy Mason are working together on this and the bid will be submitted by the end of June.

ACTION POINT 3.1 – submit to database and ask who would like to deliver on this. At least 30 places are required. **JWk**

SR praised the credentials of FC and SWA in their approach to this funding bid. Some Local Authority proposals for delivery fail to provide opportunities for progress, e.g. filling potholes and litter picking.

AN suggested Warwickshire College involvement in delivery. KS explained that Groundwork UK is putting together a bid for 1000 jobs in the West Midlands and anyone interested should contact Janet Armstrong.

Natural Assets fund has had approval from RDPE and offers £2million revenue for capital investment in rural areas to enhance natural assets and some also research projects. 10-15 projects will be funded over the next two to three years. Funding can be up to 90%. Natural England will publish details July/August 2009.

RBa asked if anyone had applied for Access to Nature or Eco Minds. SWA have funded a Telford project with Access to Nature and are working up one for the Marches. Engage, the project by CSA Birmingham has also been funded by this. Eco Minds is focused more locally.

Opportunities for EU Life Plus will be the topic at a Seminar next Tuesday. Jeff Edwards is co-ordinating a Life Plus bid by September for four or five sub-regional projects, which are water/biodiversity/land-based. There will be further bidding rounds.

SW said that Bill Heslegrave is preparing a paper on this for the Regional Woodland & Forestry Forum meeting in July and this could be disseminated to this task group.

4 Apprenticeships feedback

- Saw milling apprenticeships no longer with Lantra.
- Frameworks for Arboriculture/Forestry are proving difficult to achieve, especially the key skills element. Delivering five key skills is demanding.
- SWA Coppice Project highlighted literacy and numeracy problems reflected in forestry employees and more effort is need to show what individuals need to know.
- FC has national funding for two projects, one in the West Midlands the other in the South West.

- AN said that work with farriers found block-release was preferable to day-release for delivery of functional skills.
- Work in the Woods Week hosted by SWA in April had 27 attendees and resulted in 14 applications for the forestry apprenticeship at Holme Lacy College from September.
- No formal level three framework at present
- NVQ structure is up for review. The existing framework will continue to run alongside throughout the review process.
- a new draft structure for Green Wood trades is being developed, for launch beginning next year.
- Work-based diplomas will supersede apprenticeships. These should be more flexible and tailored to employer requirements.
- Under the Qualification Credit Framework, certificates can be taken as solitary units or build to the whole diploma. This should lead to smaller qualifications, which usually find difficulty getting funding being more successful.

5 14-19 ELB Diploma

City & Guilds has had generic model. Each Consortia running in 2009 are able to set delivery now. West Midlands hold regional meetings to share best practice, which AN attends. The diplomas offer applied learning and research, with links to wider context through theoretical proposal projects. Employers will set challenges, which working groups will make proposals and receive feedback from the employers. Lantra have been discussing different delivery models with employers, e.g. telephone or presentation.

SW showed prospectus paper he is working on. The first page sets out the objective and then the prospectus is broken down into more detail. It lists the organisations SW has had contact with. These include Woodland Trusts, Private Forestry Companies and organisations like SWA, Private Estates and Local Authorities.

How to manage employer and participant involvement should be considered and students strengths and weaknesses should match employer threats and opportunities. AN suggested putting on diploma website www.diploma-support.org

ACTION POINT 5.1 – SW to discuss with AN and send out via regional networks, those on the list and Consortia with a briefing to manage expectations.

SW

ACTION POINT 5.2 – SW paper to be circulate with minutes for SFTG members to endorse.

ALL

ACTION POINT 5.3 – SW to discuss DVD approach to student recruitment with AN

SW

LS brought an example of a pack from Warwickshire College for prospective employers. LS works with 200 employers offering student placements and explained that they value having one person to contact. She assists with packaging of employer needs and these also include child protection and personnel training. Lantra has also developed a wide range of preparation material for employers.

ACTION POINT 5.4 – AN could give a presentation at Woodland & Forest Industry Task Group to gauge what their issues and enthusiasms are.

SW/AN

A regional awareness-raising event was suggested. JWk is happy to offer the Green Wood Centre as a venue. Evaluating the success of an RSPCA event by Lantra will be the next step.

6 Good practice guide

Thank you extended to KS for draft first version of the guide. Comments for further amendments were as follows:

- Better definition of purpose of the Guide at the start, ensuring not too broad and sharper focus on social forestry projects.
- Confusion between sections B and C to be addressed. B should give advice to practitioners wishing to set up a diploma programme. Section C is aimed at agencies and provides a flow chart of how to get in touch with local social forestry projects. It should assess delivery needs.
- Out of date information needs to be addressed.
- Links will need checking constantly as pages get reassigned and removed frequently from websites.

ACTION POINT 6.1 – Feedback to JWk so Katherine gets one direction

All

ACTION POINT 6.2 - Another version within the month and final version before next meeting

JWk/KS

6 AOB

RDPE Update

Lantra's skills funding bid has been successful though the contract is yet to be signed. Looking for employers to deliver and recruiting members for the Skills Strand Project Team at present. Calls for proposals will be within the next eight weeks and register of interest is already available on the Lantra website

Woodworks 2

JWk working with Moreton Morrell College on a bid for land skills programme for the West Midlands. This should strengthen regional coverage.

7 Date and venue of the next Meeting

2nd September 10:00 at FC Worcester, Room 107