

## Heartwoods Woodfuel Project Steering Group meeting – 24 March Green Wood Centre

### Attendees

Nick Maskery (Heartwoods)  
Victoria Jones (Rural Hubs)  
Laura Parry (Woodland Trust)  
Sara Roberts (WMRFF)  
Bob Gregson (Advantage West Midlands)  
Bill Heslegrave (FC)  
Andy Grundy (ConFor / MWF)  
Phil Ridley (Woodworks)  
Caroline Harrison (ConFor)

### Apologies

Rod Pommery (SWA)  
Amanda Pearce (Natural England)

### Summary of Action Points

- Heartwoods engage other private, public and voluntary sector mechanisms (e.g. Confor) in addition to using the FC agent's seminar to engage sector and to inform on delivery.
- Heartwoods Development Paper to be finalised in April with Report at next Steering Group meeting with additional information on future governance to be included
- Heartwoods Update Report (Q2) attached as accompanying document to this report for perusal and copy of revised delivery plan is available upon request.
- Training – Continued utilisation and signposting to Woodworks through the Heartwoods PR and engagement strategies. Rural Hubs to speak to Woodworks delivery partners in Staffordshire, Warwickshire, Herefordshire and Worcestershire to encourage delivery of woodworks subsidised programme to land based industry beneficiaries.
- Heartwoods events endorsed. NM to speak to ICF (Jim Waterson) and RFS to find out other events programmes to avoid duplication and possible joined up events.
- It was agreed that Heartwoods should request clarity on the nature of the Evaluation Report required in the first year of the project.
- Launched last September, WEG administered by Herefordshire County Council. To date Heartwoods has facilitated over 55 WEG applications including 25 site visits that have resulted in 5 approvals. However the process has slowed as Herefordshire Council have yet to receive the contract variation allowing them to release funds. Bob Gregson to check with AWM on status of contract issue to HC. Bill Heslegrave to raise issue at RDPE Partners Meeting on 6<sup>th</sup> April
- New Heartwoods prospectus and website expected to be completed by end of April.
- Next meeting set for 22 June at 10.30 am (Greenwood Centre).

## Meeting Notes

### 1. Terms of Reference (TOR)

TOR for the group issued by NM accepted although it was suggested that Heartwoods uses additional private sector engagement forum such as the ConFor members meeting. Amanda Pearce to be a “dormant” partner in the steering group until a decision is made on NE policy in relation to engagement with Heartwoods and whether there is a wider issue in relation to interpretation on funding for small woodlands through RDPE (EWGS/HLS).

### 2. Heartwoods Development Paper

SW gave an update on the work that Stewart Scull (Heartwoods Development Officer) had undertaken and the potential prioritised actions including Heartwoods for Farms (Small woodlands), Social Forestry, and Task Force. This final version of the report is to be completed by mid April. Small Woods will then review this work to establish viability (economic and benefit to woodland stakeholders). Additional information on future governance was requested offering clarity with regards to the roles and responsibilities of any future Steering Group.

### 3. Update and Delivery Plan

NM gave an update of work to date and a copy of the second quarter progress report is attached as separate document. NM also described potential change of the project to become an ‘enabling project’ supporting the rural sector woodland / forestry based as agreed with Richard Hillier (RDPE Team Leader) including the following changes to the current project:-

Measure 312 is not directly relevant as this was originally planned for feasibility support for wood energy boilers to West Midlands based businesses. However, the planned “Re-think Energy II” project remit will deliver this activity across the rural areas of the region with an anticipated 100% feasibility funding.

It is now proposed to:-

- Spread the £51,000 (allocated to 312) over the remaining term of the project through measure 114 to be funded through 80% intervention rate for the development of specific woodland management planning support (to be delivered principally through panel of private sector experts) and;
- Change to an increased intervention rate for measure 111 to 100% to support the ‘enabling’/‘facilitation’ aspect of the project as agreed with the RDPE Team Leader and internally with the Heartwoods Executive Director and the Heartwoods Steering Group at previous steering group meeting.

Heartwoods will focus on the following activity:-

**Training** – We can offer generalised training and we will promote Woodworks who deliver certified training (FMOC, Chainsaw certs, etc) across the region.

**Advocacy** – We are an impartial industry support mechanism supported through RDPE and are particularly interested in helping stakeholders to bring unmanaged woodland into management and to facilitate economic activity in the industry.

**Subsidised advice:** - Planning support service where we can offer a Forestry consultant (from our approved panel) to provide advisory services or if they wish to go further a Woodland Management Plan. It is envisaged this will cover :- access, volume assessment, machinery, extraction assessment, links to forestry contractors and grants available This option will be subsidised to 80% and we are currently contracting around twelve consultants across the region.

**Signposting / Grant facilitation** – The Heartwoods team can help stakeholders with info on grants, signposting and offer an excellent resource as a first point of contact for any woodland associated stakeholders.

**Events** – Undertaking around 15 events per annum geared at what industry needs (feedback would be great). This can be anything from increasing market awareness to machinery demonstrations.

#### 4. Training –

Phil Ridley gave an update on Woodworks programme where uptake has been extremely good in Shropshire with Staffordshire and Warwickshire now starting to deliver. However, difficulty in Herefordshire where there is currently no organisation to deliver the training in the County despite particular interest from the industry. PR also covered changes in Landskills Delivery arrangements where now have go-ahead from Landskills to deliver any technical certified training that industry needs even if outside current prospectus. The Landskills contract will be revised in September 2010 and re-submissions for 2 year contracts are invited. It is envisaged that future delivery contracts issued by Lantra Landskills will be simpler to deliver and less bureaucratic.

Rural Hubs would be utilised to speak to Woodworks delivery partners in respective areas to support engagement.

#### 5. Events going Forward –

The group went through Events Paper that had been provided in advance of meeting. All events were endorsed with the following minor amendments:-

- Charcoal Making to be incorporated into added value event
- To look at possibility of incorporating a holistic approach to the Wood Pellet event at Clifford Jones Timber.
- Look into joint marketing and delivery with key partners (e.g. Confor for “Where is the timber and who is going to cut it event”)

It was also agreed that Heartwoods should speak to ICF (Jim Waterson) and RFS to find out other events programmes to avoid duplication and possible joined up events.

#### 6. Opportunities for Joint Marketing

There was discussion around joint marketing for specific events. It was agreed that the Heartwoods Project Officer should make judgements on effective partners to use for specific events and make contact to market events effectively and to attain maximum

exposure to the industry and what the industry needs. List of events to be organised as soon as possible and updated to ICF, RFS and ConFor along with steering group and primary stakeholders including NFU, CLA. NM to inform John Powell (Heartwoods Project Officer) and task to organise events programme.

#### 7. Evaluation Report-

It was agreed that Heartwoods should request clarity on the nature of the Evaluation Report required in the first year of the project. If this is a significant piece of work then Heartwoods could consider FC resource that may be available to support this work as a low cost option.

#### 8. Woodland Enterprise Grant (WEG) Update –

WEG administered by Herefordshire County Council. To date Heartwoods has facilitated over 55 WEG applications including 25 site visits that have resulted in 5 approvals. To date no contracts have been issued as Herefordshire County Council has not received the delivery contract from Advantage West Midlands. Bob Gregson is to look into the position on this. Bill Heslegrave to raise issue at RDPE Partners Meeting on 6<sup>th</sup> April.

#### 9. Marketing and PR –

NM circulated the draft Woodland Funding and Support for the West Midlands brochure. This is based on a similar document produced in the SW that has been well received. The prospectus should go live before end of April along with the new website that is currently in design and is based on a similar format to the Yorwoods website. It is anticipated that the new website will go live at the end of April / early May.

#### 10. Next Meeting and proposed Chair –

The next steering group meeting date was set for 22 nd June at 10.30 am at the Greenwood Centre. It was suggested that Bob Gregson should chair the next meeting but this has been declined by AWM for operational reasons. A chair for the next meeting will be proposed in advance of the next meeting.

#### 11. AOB –

The Steering Group thanked the Heartwoods team for the hard work, tenacity and enthusiasm for work done to date.

Nick Maskery  
(Project Manager)

Sara Roberts  
Steering Group Chair

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