

Heartwoods Woodfuel Project Steering Group meeting – 17 December Green Wood Centre

Attendees

Nick Maskery (Heartwoods)
Victoria Jones (Rural Hubs)
Laura Parry (Woodland Trust)
Sara Roberts (WMRFF)
Bill Heslegrave (FC)
Andy Grundy (Confor / MWF)
Phil Ridley (Woodworks)

Apologies

Bob Gregson (Advantage West Midlands)
Amanda Pearce (Natural England)
Caroline Harrison (ConFor)

Meeting Points

1. Introduction to Heartwoods, RDPE funding allocation and envisaged delivery (NM)

Heartwoods Introduction presentation attached with covering email.

It was noted that the steering group functionality will be to provide the strategic guide to the project. This first meeting was the first stage in the development of the project and the delivery and accountability structures of the Heartwoods programme.

2. Activity

Project has undertaken following tasks since appointment of Nick Maskery as Project Manager on the 4 th November.

Recruitment

Rachel Meehan appointed as project co-ordinator to start on the 4 January 2010. Rachael has been co-ordinating short courses at the Greenwood Centre for last three years on a part-time basis.

John Powell has taken up the post of Woodfuel Project Officer and will be taking up this position on the 25 January 2010. John's previous positions include Estate Manager with Derwen College and Reserves Officer with Shropshire Wildlife Trust.

Woodfuel Champions

Heartwoods have received 22 expressions of interest by the 20 December and the list of these is enclosed in appendix I. It is envisaged that Heartwoods will review the applicants in relation to skills requirement of the sector and determine training requirements for the Woodfuel champions in January. This will result in the development of a Woodfuel training course tailored to individual skills requirements to be delivered in February /

March 2010. The aim will be to support a panel of industry experts across the region to support woodfuel and forestry related businesses through training and advisory services.

Woodland Enterprise Grant

Heartwoods taken over 50 enquiries that have resulted in 21 visits. Another 5 visits scheduled for mid January. Herefordshire CC Project Officer now in position to take project forward as part of stage 2 and projects moving forward on this basis.

Wood Energy Task Group

It was discussed whether the Wood Energy Task Group could be refreshed to link in with Heartwoods to provide a private sector industry steer to the project. The group decided that this should be reviewed. NM to liaise with AG (current chair) to develop ideas and contact Simon West regarding 'terms of reference' for Steering group and for any revised WETG arrangements.

Raising Awareness

Heartwoods initiated marketing strategy and made presentations to Rural Hubs, CLA, NFU, Organic Farmers Conference, and Herefordshire County Council.

Financial Profiling

NM has made several changes to project funding to reconcile late start of the project. AWM have requested a refreshed delivery and financial profile that will present an opportunity to change funds from measure 312 (Business diversification with 50% funding) to 114 (Advisory services for farmers and forest holders). This decision was taken due to the availability of grant funding to support technology end use feasibility studies that can be funded through Re-Think Energy and move to measure 114 where Heartwoods can use to support strategic business advice such as management or business plans. It was agreed that the change from measure 312 to 114 should be undertaken.

3. Heartwoods Woodfuel Delivery Framework

NM currently scoping out industry requirements. Proposed woodfuel training points captured at the meeting included:-

- basic woodland management
- how to assess your timber - volume & value
- marketing your timber
- Added value Markets
- woods for wildlife
- deer and woods
- how to promote your business
- business link services
- grants for forestry/biomass
- Branding
- Public Sector and how biomass can help with CO 2 reduction / commitments
- Stress grading

- High / Formative Pruning

The group suggested that Heartwoods should make contact with other regional woodfuel projects such as Woodfuel East, SW Woodland Renaissance to gather their experience over as these projects have been delivering on RDPE activity over the past year.

4. Headline action plan and targets to summer 2010 –

NM to develop a Delivery plan for the project before the end of this financial year and this will provide the framework for scrutinising and overall project performance. NM will use the Steering group and the refreshed WETG to inform this process along with the wider work that Stewart Scull (Heartwoods Policy Paper) and Sara Roberts (WMRFF) are undertaking.

5. AOB

- Bill Heslegrave was to make contact with Natural England regarding future Heartwoods meetings.
- Envisaged that meetings would take place initially on a quarterly basis for the first 12 months and then every 6 months after the project was established.
- NM to liaise with Simon West regarding the development of a 'Terms of Reference' for the steering group.
- NM to provide dates for next meeting in due course.

Nick Maskery

Steering Group member Rep

Annex 1. Woodfuel Champion Applications

Person	Company	Area	comments
Brandon Oram	Beyond the Stove	shrops	
Tim Shardlow	Nicholsons Nurseries	Warks	
Warren Landles	Landles Rural Service	Shrops, Hereford, Worcs	
Jenny Joy	Butterfly Conservation	All	
Gavin Jordan	Interface-NRM	Shrops, Staffs	
Alex Thackeray	Hayton Contracting	Shrops, Heref, Worcs	
?	Access & Habitat Management	Shrops	
B Porter(?)	FWAG	All	
James Cartwright	CFS	Shrops, Staffs	
Jonathan Hazell	Parkwood Cons Services	Warks	
Joe Bentley	MEA	Shrops, Heref	
Marc Liebrecht	Smiths Gore	All	
Jon Kean	Kaizen Development	Shrops +?	
Mike Annis	National Trust	Shrops	
Matthew Rhodes	Encraft	All (warks)	
Andrew Bronwin	Andrew Bronwin	Shrops, Heref, Worcs	
Stuart Pearson	UPM Tilhill	All	
Chris Wait	Chris Wait	Shrops, Staffs	
Brian Barker	SHAONB	SHAONB	
Andy Grundy	MWF	Across Region	

Duncan Webster	Abbey Forestry		
Others			