

**Minutes for the  
Farm Woodland Forum  
Annual General Meeting  
Wednesday 19 June 2024  
Cranfield University, Bedfordshire**



**Annual General Meeting**

**Present:** Paul Burgess, John Holland (Acting Treasurer), Ian Lane, Jim McAdam, Geoff Newman, Jim O'Neil, Andrew Ormerod (Secretary), James Ramskir-Gardiner, Ben Raskin, Ulrich Schmutz, Clive Thomas, David Pilbeam, Heather Gibbard, Anil Graves, Kevin Donkers, Elsa Webb, Terry Thomas, Michail Giannitsopoulos, Jari Vandendriessche, Sally Westaway, Tom Staton, Christian Gossel and Magdalena Durand.

**Apologies:** Emma Eberhardt, Fred Farrelly, Maureen Kilgore, Rodrigo Olave, Tim Pagella, Clive Thomas (Treasurer), John Tucker (Outgoing-Chair), Will Simonson.

**1. Minutes of the 2023 Annual General Meeting.**

Jim O'Neil chaired the meeting, in John Tucker's absence. Jim read out the highlights of minutes from the 2023 meeting held in Greenmount College, Northern Ireland available on the FWF website [here](#).

Minutes were unanimously approved.

**2. Chairperson's report** (John Tucker read out by Jim O'Neill in his absence)

2024 was another very busy year for the Farm Woodland Forum and one in which the profile and delivery of agroforestry and farm woodlands in the UK took several significant steps forward. My personal highlight was the Agroforestry Show held at Helen Browning's farm in September 2023 where the Forum had a stand and the opportunity to promote itself and the value of trees and woods on farms to more than 1,000 visitors. Thanks to all those who helped set up and man our stand over the 2-day event. The 2023 annual meeting in Northern Ireland was a success, as I'm sure the 2024 one in Cranfield will be. These meetings are vital, both to see agroforestry in action in different locations and contexts around the UK but also from a social viewpoint to allow members old and new to share experiences. The monthly committee meetings seem to come around very quickly, but I think the short, sharp regular meetings work well. Thanks to all who attend and contribute but particularly to Andrew for the timely sending out of agendas and subsequent prompt reporting of minutes.

The Forum is all about research and information exchange and I think the ongoing events program is a really important component of that. The 2023 program looked at the practical issues of establishing and maintaining an agroforestry system with 2024 having more of an international theme to highlight lessons that the UK could learn. It does take

time, effort, and patience to organize such a program and big thanks to Jim O'Neil and Harriet for their efforts. I think these events could be of interest to a much wider audience than we are currently attracting.

The Forum website is probably the best tool available to promote trees and woods and the work of the Forum and I think it's really improved over the last year in terms of content and keeping up to date. As with the events all of this takes time and thanks to David and Christian for their efforts here. The biggest hurdle we have had to overcome this year seems to have been sorting out the banking arrangements! At one point I thought we were never going to get there but Clive and John have persisted for far longer than I could have done, and I look forward to seeing the new arrangements helping us get more members in. I've thoroughly enjoyed chairing the Forum, but I am also very pleased to be handing it over to the very capable hands of Jim.

### **3. Secretary's report (Andrew Ormerod)**

**International collaboration:** Members of the FWF exec. together with Maureen Kilgore from the Irish Agroforestry Forum have continued our dialogue across 'the pond'. This is currently with Meghan Giroux from Interlace Commons and Hannah Hemmelgarn from the University of Missouri Center for Agroforestry and the American Association of Temperate Agroforestry (the US equivalent of Farm Woodland Forum). The main focus at the moment is exploring the potential of international webinars linked to agroforestry training modules for a range of stakeholders. The question posed by our outgoing chairman, John Tucker, was 'What would an international webinar addressing agroforestry training look like?'. Our international discussion considered US and Irish experiences, which highlighted the need for different levels of information and questions arising from the stakeholder groups identified (1, farmers, 2, foresters, 3, policy makers and 4, policy makers, who are farmers or natural resource professionals, with an important catalyzing role to play). The outcome so far is that there is a need for 3-4 separate training webinars to meet the needs of these stakeholders.

**Agroforestry Show:** members of the Executive Committee ran a stand at the show held at Helen Browning's farm near Swindon last September. We had a map to register Agroforestry sites in the UK and Ireland that could be visited or open to the public in some form. We also had leaflets to recruit new members.

**JISCmail:** There have been 85 postings and 152 JISCmail contacts since the last AGM in June 2023. Numbers are similar to last year- (82 postings, 162 JISCmail contacts), down from 177 in 21-22. JISCmail provides opportunities to debate interesting, new, cutting edge and controversial research findings. It also provides opportunities to ask fellow members for advice. Both areas featured in this year's longest threads. Subjects creating greatest traffic were 'Some new tree planting takes 12-39 years before it begins to take in more C than the soil is losing', (17 in total); 'Request for silvopasture insight - to inform an organic dairy farm in Cumbria' (9); 'Paulownia and nitrogen fixing' (5).

**Monthly Executive Committee meetings:** We have continued with our monthly Exec meetings to ensure continuity.

**2022-23 Charity Commission Annual Return and Trustee Update:** this was submitted at

the end of September 2023.

**EURAF (European Agroforestry Federation) meetings:** Tim Pagella and Paul Burgess have participated along with Maureen Kilgore from the Irish Agroforestry Forum.

**IAF links:** there continues to be good links with Maureen Kilgore and the Irish Agroforestry Forum. Some Farm Woodland Forum members have participated in Irish Agroforestry Forum 'Member's meets online. Several Farm Woodland Forum members attended the Irish International Conference in Bantry.

**Webinars** –Jim O'Neill has developed an international program of agroforestry webinars with input from Harriet Bell.

#### **4. Website report (David Pilbeam)**

**Map:** The map of agroforestry sites across the UK and Ireland that went live on the website in spring 2023 (under 'UK & Irish agroforestry > Agroforestry near you') has been added to during the year. At the time of last year's AGM there were 57 sites shown, now there are 80. As well as increasing the number of sites shown on the map, I have tried to keep more up to date with 'News' items on the front page. The live X (twitter) feed on the front page has been removed as it lost functionality following the takeover of the Twitter company. There is still a link to the Farm Woodland Forum X site on the front page.

Over the past year we had 11,000 users and 44,000 pages viewed. An increase on 13,172 pages viewed in the previous year. As in previous years, the Agroforestry Systems – Pastoral page was the most visited page, with the whole of 'About us' area coming in behind it. The 'Resources' area was the third most visited part of the site. Visitors, more than half of whom live in the UK, seem to be looking for information on agroforestry or on the Farm Woodland Forum itself. 'Events' are shown on the front page of the website, so do not appear in the page view statistics opens one of them to find more details. The Agroforestry Show picked up more than 300 views, the most clicked on 'Event' of the year.

As in previous years, we have regular contacts through the 'Contact us' facility on the site. As in previous years, this is often from students asking if we know of any placements in agroforestry available to them, and I always give guidance about how to identify potential employers without actually sending out emails on the JISCmail system to ask members if they have any vacancies to avoid overloading their inboxes. We continue to receive increasing numbers of contacts from members of the public interested in establishing agroforestry plots themselves.

Thanks are due to the James Hutton Institute for housing us on their server, to Andrew Thorburn at James Hutton for the time he spends helping the website. At the last AGM Christian Gossel was voted on to the Executive Committee, and he has joined me as being one of two nominated members able to make changes to the website. Christian has done a deep trawl through the website, picking up errors, and adding map sites and articles. Thanks were expressed to David for his work on the website over many years.

## 5. Treasurer and Membership Secretary's report (John Holland)

John Holland presented the Forum's accounts from 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2024 as Clive Thomas was unable to attend the AGM.

### Membership numbers

John reported the following membership numbers:

#### The Farm Woodland Forum

33 ordinary members and 3 student members (1<sup>st</sup> April 2023 - 31<sup>st</sup> December 2023).

29 ordinary members and 2 students for 2024, as of 1<sup>st</sup> May 2024.

#### EURAF

17 members (1st January 2023 - 31st December 2023).

22 members for 2024 as of 1st May 2024.

### Accounts

The opening balance on 1 April 2023 was £9,194.30. The closing balance on 31 March 2024 was £8,580.15.

### Statement of the account from 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2024

		Amount (£)
<b>INCOME</b>	Opening balance (1 April 2023)	9,194.30
	FWF membership fees (2023)	333.00
	EURAF membership fees (2023)	140.00
	FWF membership fees (2024)	281.00
	EURAF membership fees (2024)	199.48
	Annual Conference registration fees (2023)	1,671.06
	<b>TOTAL INCOME</b>	<b>2,624.54</b>
<b>EXPENDITURE</b>	Transfer of funds to EURAF (membership fees)	123.61
	Eventbrite Service Fee (conference bookings)	193.79
	Insurance	269.44
	Conference Bursaries (2023)	309.25
	Annual Conference and Agroforestry Show Costs	2,342.60

<b>TOTAL EXPENDITURE</b>	<b>3,238.69</b>
<b>CLOSING BALANCE (31<sup>st</sup> March 2024)</b>	<b>8,580.15*</b>

\* Includes €200 of EURAF subscriptions (2024)

John Holland (02/05/2024) Independently checked and found to be correct by Ann McLaren (24/05/2024)

#### **Account update – move to online banking.**

- The Bank of Scotland mandate has been updated and approved. (Thank you to all the trustees for filling in the required forms).
- The FWF Treasurer details have been updated and Clive Thomas is now the official FWF Treasurer. All treasurer and membership enquiries should be sent to Clive.
- John Holland's tenure as a co-opted member of the Executive Committee will cease after this AGM.
- The FWF Treasurer is now able to use online banking.
- Membership for both the FWF and EURAF will run from 1<sup>st</sup> January of each year.
- It is hoped that an online membership payment method will be developed and will be in operation for the start of 2025.

Thanks were expressed by those present for the many years of dedicated work John Holland has contributed as Membership Secretary and Treasurer of the Farm Woodland Forum.

#### **6. Communication Officer's report (Ben Raskin)**

The Farm Woodland Forum main online presence apart from the website are our Facebook Page with 498 followers, which we do not actively manage and our twitter account 1198 followers which Ben does put some content out on, but which is becoming less used and useful to reach our target audience. He is considering starting an Instagram account which is increasingly the forum of choice.

The Agroforestry UK Facebook group administered by Ben has currently 2,300 members which is the most active social media for UK agroforestry at present.

#### **7. Election of the Executive Committee and posts at the 2023 AGM**

The following members of the Executive had to stand again for re-election after serving for three years: John Tucker; David Pilbeam and Ian Short. David Pilbeam has decided to stand down after 9 years on the Exec. Ian is involved with the Irish Agroforestry Forum Executive Committee. John Tucker remains keen to remain on the Executive Committee.

Newly elected members to the Executive Committee and/or working groups were Geoff Newman, James Ramskir-Gardiner, Terry Thomas, Kevin Donkers, and Elsa Webb. It was agreed that the appointment of new trustees to replace David and Ian would be addressed at the next Executive Committee meeting.

These new appointments were proposed by Jim O'Neill and seconded by Paul Burgess and agreed by a show of hands.

### **8. EURAF representation**

Tim Pagella and Paul Burgess have represented the FWF at EURAF. Tim indicated if someone was keen to represent the UK at EURAF he would be happy to stand aside. James Ramskir-Gardiner expressed interest in undertaking this role. Hence Paul Burgess and James Ramskir-Gardiner were selected as the FWF EURAF representatives for 2024-25.

### **9. Confirmation of Executive Committee Offices**

At the last AGM it was suggested that Jim O'Neill would stand as chairperson from June 2024 and John Tucker would be chair for the 2023/24 year. Jim's position as chair from June 2024 was proposed by Paul Burgess and seconded by Andrew Ormerod and agreed by a show of hands.

It was agreed that Andrew Ormerod would continue as Secretary. Ben Raskin would continue as the Communication Officer. Clive Thomas would be the Treasurer and Membership Secretary. It was proposed that Christian Gossel become the Website Officer following the departure of David Pilbeam. This was confirmed by a show of hands.

### **10. Future meeting dates and venues**

**2025 Farm Woodland Forum:** Jim O'Neill proposed Scotland – he would discuss the idea further with Lynn White. It was suggested that a date in May or June could be explored to avoid any clash with other meetings such as Groundswell in June and the midges! (Postscript: there is a proposal that Groundswell 2025 will occur during the first week of July).

**The 6<sup>th</sup> World Agroforestry Congress** will take place on 19-23 May 2025 in Kigali, Rwanda.

**The 8<sup>th</sup> European Agroforestry Conference** is planned for 22-26 June 2026 in Neuchâtel, Switzerland.

### **11. Any other business**

Ben reported that there would be an Agroforestry Show next year at the Soil Association Land Trust, Woodoaks Farm, Hertfordshire; 10-11<sup>th</sup> October. hopefully attracting 1500 attendees.

Andrew Ormerod  
21 June 2024

