**Minutes for the**

**Farm Woodland Forum   
Annual General Meeting**

**Thursday 09 July 2025**

**King’s College,**

**University of Aberdeen, Scotland**

**Annual General Meeting: Present in person:** Jim O’Neill; Andrew Ormerod; Paul Burgess; Kaisa Ilmari; Stephen McConnachie; Imogen Ryan; Kevin Donkers; Ulrich Schmutz; John Holland; Mike Davies; Rosemary Venn; Clive Thomas; David Burslem; Christian Gossel; Heather Gibbard; Julie Rostan; Katrin Prager; Josie Geris

**Present online:** Jim McAdam; Elsa Webb; Harriet Bell.

**Apologies:** David Pilbeam.

**1, Minutes of the 2024 Annual General Meeting**.

FWF chairman, Jim O’Neil, welcomed members to the AGM and read the minutes from the 2024 AGM – highlighting ongoing conversations about possible alternatives to JISCmail as online communication programs to supersede it or run in parallel. Jim highlighted the close links with the Irish Agroforestry Forum. The Agroforestry Show on 10th/11th September 2025 was flagged up from the minutes. The meeting held at Cranfield University are available on the FWF website [here](https://www.agroforestry.ac.uk/sites/www.agroforestry.ac.uk/files/2024-12/AGM%20minutes%202024.pdf).

**2. Chairperson’s report** (Jim O’Neil)

**Review of last year’s AGM minutes**

Jim highlighted the interest from members in being involved in the Exec last year – (see Appendix 1) However, this doesn’t necessarily translate into active members, so there is a need to encourage sufficient members to turn up to meetings.

**Webinars**

We hosted a series of very interesting international webinars last year, which are on the FWF website, as YouTube video links. Challenges experienced with these include putting the series together, early enough and getting them out in a timely fashion and publicizing them soon enough to attract more viewers; something we need to improve on. The first international webinar is on 29th July\*.

(\*N.B. The start of the international seminar series was delayed until mid-summer because of uncertainty caused by the US elections).

**Working Groups**

We set up some working groups this year, which haven’t worked that great – the subjects are valid and worthwhile – we do need to have a bit of a rethink in relation to improve delivery.

**Need for collaboration for agroforestry mapping**

There are opportunities for collaboration between the different mapping projects. We need to rethink and connect to others, by identifying common mapping outcomes that meet everyone’s needs.

**Peer to peer and intergenerational learning**

Peer to peer learning is a challenge we need to address; we learnt from John Holland’s presentation how some agricultural students struggling to see the light even when shown things; highlighting the need to get the message over to certain demographics.

**International webinars**

With Meghan Giroux from the USA who was here today and Maureen at the Irish Agroforestry Forum – we are carrying on our international themes across the water. Meghan has been instrumental working with Andrew, Maureen and others on the next international webinar series. That will be something to look forward to.

**Monthly Executive meetings**

We currently have 12, I thinking we need to drop down to 10 with breaks around summertime and Christmas. Something to put on our agenda for our next committee meeting Generally its working well we need to get sufficient people along to make decisions.

**Thanks**

Thanks to Clive Thomas who took over from John Holland as treasurer for his perseverance in setting up online banking which was not easy and Andrew Ormerod who holds the fort together.

**Points arising?**

Clive Thomas - Presentations at the meeting were fantastic; some of the talks today may be a basis for webinars easier to achieve than to go back to a blank sheet of paper. (Agenda item for a future meeting).

**3. Secretary’s report** (Andrew Ormerod)

**International collaboration**

Has been very successful: Conversations have continued between Farm Woodland Forum member; Maureen Kilgore from the Irish Agroforestry Forum and Meghan Giroux from Interlace Commons to develop a series of International Webinars linked to Agroforestry Training for this year.  It’s taken a while, and it has evolved but its good. Focus has been on identifying the target audience (Farms, Foresters, Policy Makers and Advocates) and developing the format for the webinars. We can benefit from the experiences in America they have gone through the phase of funding suddenly being available and the need to skill people up. We are planning to run a series of 4 meetings.   The first of these will be at the end of July will be Meghan Giroux and Kevin Wolz linked to the use of technology in Agroforestry. The series will include session linked to policy makers and training service providers and long-term outcomes and market development.

**Collaboration with the Irish Agroforestry Forum**

We continue to work closely with the Irish Agroforestry Forum and Maureen Kilgore has provided technical assistance in relation to access to document templates and hosting platforms for Farm Woodland Forum webinars until the latter has been developed in house.  Many thanks to Maureen and the IAF.

**EURAF meetings.**

The European Agroforestry Federation meet online approximately monthly. Paul and sometimes Tim Pagella have been attended the meetings. They are generally quite productive. James Ramskir-Gardiner put his name forward last year to represent the FWF on EURAF with Paul Burgess but was unable to take part; he is keen to participate this year. (Proposed Jim O’Neill seconded Kevin Donkers)

**EURAF 2026 conference**

The next European agroforestry conference is in Switzerland 22-26th June 2026.

**JISCmail –** (communication channel for farmers, academics, NGO’s, experienced agroforestry practitioners, students etc.)

**JISCmail email list (9th July 2025)**

Currently we have 332 names listed on JISCmail (a proportion currently paid-up members).

**Two topics relating to JISC mail discussed in the Exec. meetings.**

***A, Drop in JISC mail usage this year, compared to previous years.***

Table below shows drop in JISC mail usage this year, compared to previous years. The comparison includes 20/21 when it reached its peak during lockdown.

***JISC mail correspondence***

2024/25 47 postings and 73 contacts (until mid-June).

***This compares with: -***

2023/24 85 postings and 152 contacts

2022/23 82 postings and 162 contacts

2021/22 197 postings and 280 contacts

2020/21 303 postings and 222 contacts

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AI-generated content may be incorrect.

Most popular posts 24/25 were: -

1, Paul Burgess’s posting on [Online map of trees outside woodland in England](https://www.jiscmail.ac.uk/cgi-bin/wa-jisc.exe?A2=FARM-WOODLAND-FORUM;5dd3e385.2504)  with 11 responses.

2, Bill Grayson ’s on. [Early farmers enhanced biodiversity in landscapes otherwise dominated by closed-canopy woodland](https://www.jiscmail.ac.uk/cgi-bin/wa-jisc.exe?A2=FARM-WOODLAND-FORUM;8083df24.2408) with 2 responses.

3, Martin Crawford’s [31-Year-old Food forest given notice by Dartington Hall Trust](https://www.jiscmail.ac.uk/cgi-bin/wa-jisc.exe?A2=FARM-WOODLAND-FORUM;25915e29.2503) with 2 responses but much wider impact beyond that.

***B, Growth in organisations offering agroforestry advice***

As the Farm Woodland Forum edges towards its 40th anniversary there are many challenges.  Thanks go to Will Simonson for his piece of work which

highlights the emergence of many more organisations in the field of agroforestry - particularly in the last year.

A chart with green and white text

AI-generated content may be incorrect.

Table illustrating changes in number of organisations providing support/resources for agroforestry research (2010/2020/2025).

**2023-24 Charity Commission Annual Return and Trustee Update:**

This was submitted Sept/Oct 2024.

**5. Treasurer and Membership Secretary’s report** (Clive Thomas)

Exec. decision was made to formalising FWF membership and accounting year to be the calendar year rather than the financial year because of the complication of EURAF requiring people to renew their membership from the 1st of January. This had posed some difficulties for people to review their membership.

Although Clive became treasurer in 2023 because of the time and difficulty of establishing online banking finally sorted out last year), He only became effective as treasurer since April last year. Clive worked with John Holland before then as he was the only one who could carry on managing the pre-digital accounts in that period. He presented the accounts at last year’s AGM as I couldn’t attend.

He will report the membership figures for 2024/25. In the minutes from last year, you had members renewing but that didn’t include members renewing at the annual conference in 2024, so there was an increase in that number. His records show we had 45 paid up members by the end of 2024. 37 of those members paid for EURAF.

This year we have tried to collect membership from January 1st.2025, considering people who renewed as part of this conference. We are now up to 69 FWF paid members in 2025, and 41 members have also paid up for EURAF. That is an increase in paid up membership; responding to badgering emails Clive sent in January and February. Also, we have attracted some new member as part of this conference which is fantastic.

**Finalised account for 2024**

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| --- | --- | --- |
| **Statement of the account from 1 April 2024 to 31 December 2024** | | Amount (£) |
|  | Opening balance (1 April 2023) | 8580.15 |
| Income | FWF membership subscriptions (2024) | 328.00 |
|  | EURAF Membership subscriptions (2024) | 180.00 |
|  | Conference registration fees (2024) | 0.00 |
|  | Other | 1.00 |
|  | Total income | **509.00** |
| Expenditure | Transfer of funds to EURAF (membership fees) | 0.00 |
|  | Eventbrite Service Fee (conference booking) | 0.00 |
|  | Insurance | 0.00 |
|  | Conference Bursaries (2024) | 800.00 |
|  | Conference and other show cost | 0.00 |
|  | Total Expenditure | **800.00** |
|  | Closing balance (31st December 2024) | **8289.15** |

Following John’s practice, Clive keeps a detailed tab with details of the different payments. - the summary takes into account the change to calendar reporting and from John to Clive; reporting is from 1st April ‘24 – 31st December ‘24.

Balance on 1st April opening balance was £8,580.15. Closing balance was £8,289.15. Income lines included membership fees; EURAF membership fees.

There were no conference fees collected from last year as that was handled by Cranfield directly. New memberships and EURAF membership from the 2024 annual meeting were transferred to our account by Cranfield as our digital account was by then working.

The only expenses were bursaries to the annual meeting and to EURAF conference last year. We gave 4 bursaries of £200. In total £800 for last year.

**Problems with EURAF payments to highlight**

Although successfully digitally banking was established there are problems with digital payment to EURAF 2024/25. The online banking we have won’t accept their swift code. Clive tried to sort it out 4 times with EURAF themselves. They have given him one more thing to try but we owe EURAF 750 euros as a result of not paying our fees this or last year. They are fully aware about it – and will celebrate when we do manage to transfer it.

Clive digitally banking on your behalf – so there needs to be some oversight of that. For the 2024 accounts he made screen shots of all the digital statements and provided a detailed spreadsheet and John Holland scrutinized that to make sure it all added up. He proposes to do that going forwards unless anyone disagrees and thinks we should employ auditors. His suggestion is that someone independently verifies these.

Clive intends presenting the 2025 accounts at the meeting next year, but he will present the accounts once finalised at the end of the year to the committee at the Jan/Feb Exec. meeting.

As of 30th June, our balance was £8758.68. That’s a reasonably healthy balance – we should find ways of subsidizing the conference.

This year the conference costs were pretty low; however, we subsidized the evening meal. We put messages out about accommodation bursaries for people in farming and students, but no one took it up\*\*. We need to work harder to spend some of that money in a productive way to further the ends of the forum.

**Questions**

Jim McAdam managed to transfer Irish Agroforestry Forum money owed to EURAF in euros. Clive said the problem is the SWIFT code rather than the currency; but perhaps suggested they could compare notes. Clive said he quite like Jim’s other idea of supporting retired members (He hoped to join them sometime soon!).

\*\* Josie Geris said there were some enquiries re bursaries, and she had some funds for that this year, which saved some money. Just to say it is likely that some attendees next year are likely to require this again. Clive thanked her for the support.

**Consideration of conference timing –**

As an addendum - John Holland and Clive had an interesting conversation about the timing of the annual meeting – this may have been discussed before.

i, Summertime accesses to vacant university accommodation keeps costs down. ii, But if we targeted it in term time it will allow more students to attend, but costs may be higher.

Jim O’Neill - The constitution discusses June as the AGM - but the AGM could be decoupled from the annual meeting.

Josie Geris – The most likely students who will be attend will be postgraduate PhD students who are active on campus at this time – not sure how many undergrad students would be around.

Jim O’Neill recalled the meeting in Wales where Tim Pagella managed to draft in a lot of students to attend.

Approval of accounts John Holland and Jim O’Neill

**6. Website** (Christian Gossel)

Christian talk about the website which has had a lot of changes, since he started in the role. The backend of the website – how it runs - was out of date. It wasn’t going to get security updates – so wasn’t safe going forward. It all needed updating at time. He took the opportunity to renew the front end of the website at the same time, most of the content stayed the same the visual look was updated, hopefully this was received quite well. This was launched at the start of this year.

**Flickr and YouTube channel**

Christian got access to the Farm Woodland Forum Flickr account; so, photos from the event will go on the website at some point.

The Farm Woodland Forum YouTube channel was created by James Ramskir-Gardiner. Hopefully videos and presentations will be further shared on the website.

**The map**

Is the major change to the website it has been updated through digitAF and ReForest European project to update all agroforestry maps within EURAF. That is still on-going work. The updated map includes GDPR considerations. We have collected the data from 33 sites, we will add more as people submit their information. Christian hopes to put some more sites on at the Agroforestry show later on in the year. Farm tree maps Christian is aware about question of time and GDPR requirements.

**Website usage**

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| --- |
| July 24 - July 25:   * 7.1k active users * Average of 52 seconds of engagement time * 23k page views * Most popular pages (apart for homepage) were map, annual meeting 2024, and Defra payments news. |
| July 23 - July 24 (for comparison):   * 12k active users * Average of 1m 12s of engagement time * 46k page view. |

Usage June 24-25 compared to June 23-24

7,000 compared to 12,000 active users last years

Average 52 secs down from 1 minute 12 seconds engagement time.

About half the number of pages were views compared to last year.

The map, AGM and DEFRA payment information were the most popular pages.

**Acknowledgement**

Thanks to Andrew Thorburn from James Hutton Institute for his continued support.

**7. Social Media (Ben Raskin)**

To be contacted later.

**8, Election of the Executive Committee and posts at the 2023 AGM**

**Committee:** we are at the end of a three-year cycle The following members of the Executive had to stand again for re-election after serving for three years: Andrew Ormerod, Clive Thomas, Harriet Bell and Richard Jackson and election of any new members to the exec.

John Tucker has retired from the exec and has been thanked for his support for FWF; Geoff Newman could not justify being on the Exec. but was happy to be co-opted.

Three of the members (Harriet, Clive and Andrew) stood again for re-election.

(Proposed Paul Burgess and seconded John Holland.)

**Election of Posts**

Jim re-elected as Chairman (proposed Paul Burgess seconded by Clive Thomas)

Andrew. re-elected as secretary (proposed Paul Burgess seconded by Ulrich Schmutz)

Clive re-elected as membership secretary/treasurer (proposed by Paul Burgess and. Jim O’Neill).

**9. Farm Woodland Forum involvement with other future events**

**Agroforestry show stand**

The FWF stand will be in the Training area next to the stand where Christian is involved in agroforestry map activities.

**Working group to develop ideas for the stand.** – Maureen Kilgore, Andrew Ormerod, Rosemary Venn and Heather Gibbard – combining inputs from the FWF, IAF and Open Farm Sunday.

**10. Future meeting dates and venues**

**2026 FWF meeting**:

No work has so far been undertaken to consider next year’s venue.

Considering rotation between countries, the next meeting and venue could be in

1, Wales or Welsh border. Such as Cardiff or in England (Herefordshire – Gloucestershire). But this isn’t written in stone.

2, England (as England is larger in size and there are more areas to consider).

Rather like the meeting in Aberdeen it may be combined with outcomes of an agroforestry research project, reducing the cost of holding the event – such as the project undertaken at Reading University.

(This will be considered at a future committee meeting.)

**11. Any other business**

i, Other events -Encourage presence at the Oxford Real Farming Conference. and Groundswell.

ii, it was acknowledged that substantial work went into the unsuccessful BBSRC bid early in the year to develop a UK research network related to agroforestry research needs. This proposed project included **Josie Geris from** the University of Aberdeen and Millie Hood from Reading University that would have involved FWF.

iii,Kevin Donkers was going to the USA to the AFTA conference, Meghan Giroux is also attending.

Andrew Ormerod

17 July 2025 17.50

**Appendix 1 change in committee make up June 2024/25 and July 2025/26**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Executive Committee Members and Trustees** (2024-2025) – 9 | **Other members of Committee**  (2024-2025) – 10 |
| John Tucker | Will Simonson |
| Harriet Bell | Christian Gossel |
| Clive Thomas | Lyn White |
| Andrew Ormerod | Lindsay Whistance |
| Richard Jackson | Nicola Warden |
| Tim Pagella | **Elected 2024** |
| Ben Raskin | Geoff Newman |
| Paul Burgess | James Ramskir-Gardiner |
| Jim O’Neill | Terry Thomas |
|  | Kevin Donkers |
| Total Exec members 19 | Elsa Webb |
|  |  |
|  | **Co-opted (2)** |
|  | Maureen Kilgore |
|  | Rory Lunny |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Executive Committee Members and Trustees** (2025-2026) – 7 | **Other members of Committee**  (2025-2026) – 9 |
| Tim Pagella (2023) | Christian Gossel (2023) |
| Ben Raskin (2023) | Lyndsay Whistance (2023) |
| Paul Burgess (2023) EURAF Rep. | Nicola Warden (2023) |
| Jim O’Neill (2023) Chairman | Will Simonson (2023) |
| Harriet Bell (elected 2025) | Lyn White (2023) |
| Clive Thomas (elected 2025)  Treasurer/Membership Secretary | James Ramskir-Gardiner (2024) EURAF Rep. |
| Andrew Ormerod (2025) Secretary | Terry Thomas (2024) |
| ) | Kevin Donkers (2024) |
|  | Elsa Webb (2024) |
| Total Exec member 16 |  |
|  | **Co-opted (3)** |
|  | Maureen Kilgore |
|  | Rory Lunny |
|  | Geoff Newman |