

**Minutes of the
Farm Woodland Forum
Annual General Meeting
27 June 2007
at the Rural College, Draperstown, Northern Ireland**



Present: Paul Burgess (Secretary), William Considine, David Corry, John Holland, Lynton Incoll, Ian Lane, Gerry Lawson (Chairman), Jim McAdam, Rosa Mosquera, David Pilbeam, Chris Stark, Mike Strachan, and Martin Wolfe.

Apologies: Tom Dutson, Ian Short, Alan Sibbald, Tony Waterhouse, Hugh Williams

The meeting started at about 7.30 pm. Gerry Lawson chaired the meeting.

1) Minutes of the 2007 Annual General Meeting at Long Wittenham, Oxfordshire

The minutes of the AGM of 27 June 2006 were accepted as being a true record of the meeting. Proposed by Chris Stark and seconded by Mike Strachan.

2) Matters arising on the minutes

It was noted that the web-address “agroforestry.eu” was not available.

There were no items arising from the minutes other than those to be raised as agenda items.

3) Chairman’s report

Gerry Lawson gave a report on the Forum’s activities during his first year as Chairman. He noted that the aim of the Farm Woodland Forum is to facilitate the generation and exchange of information that supports best practice and opportunities for farming with trees. He outlined that these aims had been met in a number of ways over the past year:

- Maintaining **membership contact** through the JISCMail newsgroup.
- Maintaining and updating the Forum’s **website**. Alan Sibbald and the Macaulay Institute were to be thanked for keeping this fresh. Lynton Incoll had done a sterling job keeping abstracts, papers and summaries from previous meetings up to date.
- Re-running the E-conference on **agroforestry policy**. This had been less of a success – with only four countries making contributions. However, the Rural Development Plans for many countries were still not finalised and it was planned to keep this questionnaire open until full responses from European countries are obtained. Whilst it was probably too late to persuade more countries to use the Agroforestry Article 44, the Forum had a major role to play in exchange of best practice in this area in future reviews of the Rural Development regulations, and particularly in the mid-term review of the CAP in 2008. Issues that we needed to campaign on include exclusion of woodland areas from Single Farm Payment eligibility, and the arbitrary use of 50 trees per hectare as a definition of ‘woodland’.
- **Consultation Responses** had been produced by the Executive Committee. In August a long response to the consultation on the English Forestry Strategy had been submitted. In April submissions went off to EU consultations on biofuels and on market-based mechanisms for environmental protection. The former stressing the role of wood energy on farms and the latter pointing to the perverse economic incentives wielded against establishment of farm woodlands and agroforestry. The English Forestry Strategy had just been published and contains at least three references to farm woodlands (not many but better than previous strategies – and at least the strategy now mentions the word ‘economic’ 20 times!). However there was still no planting target in England.
- The Forum had failed to have Article 44 included in the English and Welsh Rural Development Plans (though the Article is included in Irish, Scottish and (possibly) Northern Irish plans). This is not surprising, but disappointing.

- Attempts to include farm forestry in UK and EU research agendas were made: including potential involvement in projects on models of valuation of non-market services, the ‘wood wisdom net’, and a manual of farm woodland practice in Ireland. Executive Members had lobbied for agroforestry projects to be included in the EU Framework 7 Programme, and had contributed to a review for the UK Land Use Policy Group of the impact of globalisation and global change on forestry in the UK – including a commentary on forestry strategies in the UK.
- The Forum had not produced a **newsletter** this year. At the request of the meeting, Gerry Lawson issued a public apology to people who had contributed articles. The production of a newsletter remained a goal and hopefully an issue would be produced using the conclusions of the 2007 meeting.

Gerry Lawson noted that these were exciting times for farm forestry in the UK. Timber prices are increasing. The combination of several factors (biofuels, supply shortage from Eastern Europe and Russia, climate change, opportunities for carbon sequestration, recognition of the low-embodied energy in timber housing, and greater recognition of the environmental services of trees, hedgerows and small woodlands) was leading policy makers to realise that we need to do something about our mere 11% forest cover. Devolution had stimulated innovative thinking (particularly in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland) but tinkering around with small competitive subsidies for tree planting under the national rural development plans were unlikely to produce the impact needed on overall tree cover. Only the Irish (north and south) had an ambitious solution of government commitment to a significant target (16,000 ha/year) backed by use of Pillar I Single Farm Payments to ensure that the target is reached largely from farm forestry.

Lastly Gerry Lawson noted that the Forum was delighted that the 2007 meeting had provided the opportunity to learn about the exciting developments in Ireland, and he thanked Jim McAdam and his team for outstanding organisation and hospitality, and all the participants for making this workshop a smallish but perfectly formed success.

Lynton Incoll raised the issue of the lack of responses in the most recent E-Conference, and expressed a hope that the number of countries represented could be increased. It was agreed that an e-mail should be sent highlighting the countries not represented.

Action: Paul Burgess

4) **Secretary’s report**

Paul Burgess reported that 22 members of the Forum had paid a subscription fee in 2006-2007. This represented a decrease from the previous year primarily because the planned request for new members with a newsletter did not happen. He indicated his intention that a request for fees for 2007-08 membership would be circulated soon after the meeting. As of 26 June 2007, there were 178 contacts on the JISCmail list, up one from last year. Lynton Incoll was successfully updating e-mail address as they changed. Use of the JISCmail service (34 postings) was down on last year (48 postings).

E-mail address of JISCmail subscriber	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07
Academic	58	53	51
Government	38	37	33
Commercial (.co; org)	34	37	32
Private	25	26	32
Non-UK	19	24	30
Total	174	177	178

Paul Burgess also reported that he had submitted the 2006 Annual Charity Commission Annual Return and Trustee Update form on 4 January 2007.

5) Treasurer's report

John Holland, in place of Tony Waterhouse, presented the treasurer's report from 1 July 2006 to 30 June 2007. The balance at the beginning of the year was £3029.61, which had included £1548 of income from the 2006 conference. The costs associated with the 2006 conference, amounting to £1383, were incurred in the 2006-07 accounting period. A payment was received from the Countryside Commission for Wales for a consultancy project, of which £420 was allocated to the Forum. There was a donation of £75 from Biodiversity International. Ignoring the 2006 conference, the net surplus over the year was £445. The balance at the end of the year was £2110. John Holland reported that the accounts had been approved by an independent auditor. Lynton Incoll thanked those who had provided donations to the Forum.

Statement of the account from 1 July 2006 to 30 June 2007

Opening balance		£3029.61
Income		
Subscriptions (06/07)		£41.00
Conference registrations (2006)		£180.00
Donation		£75.00
Bank interest		£23.78
Countryside Commission for Wales (CWW)		£2622.00
Total		£2941.78
Expenditure		
Conference costs (2006)		£1383.27
Travel expenses for conference speaker		£223.71
Payment in relation to CWW report		£2202.00
Miscellaneous		£23.12
Committee expenses		£28.40
Total		£3860.50
Closing balance		£2110.89

In view of the state of the accounts, it was proposed that the annual subscription for an ordinary and student member be maintained at £10 and £1 respectively.

6) Report from the Fund-raising Sub-committee

Jon Holland, in the absence of Tony Waterhouse, reported on behalf of the fund-raising sub-committee (A. Waterhouse, T. Dutson, J. Holland and G. Lawson). He reported that the reserves of the Forum had been used to support the attendance of international speakers at the 2006 and 2007 annual meetings.

7) Report from Publicity and Publication Working Group

Gerry Lawson reported on the work of the Publicity and Publications Working Group (Gerry Lawson, Chris Stark, Ian Short and Alan Sibbald).

Website: Gerry Lawson thanked Alan Sibbald for his excellent work in maintaining the Farm Woodland Forum website.

Newsletter: no newsletter had been issued during the past year. It was still the plan to produce a newsletter in 2007.

Conference proceedings: Lynton Incoll had contacted each presenter of the 2006 meeting and those that were interested had had the opportunity to place a paper or copy of their presentation on the Farm Woodland Forum website (www.agroforestry.ac.uk). Lynton Incoll was also providing a similar offer to presenters at the 2007 meeting.

News: Gerry Lawson reported that new sharepoint software made it possible for organisations such as the Forum to host an on-line news area. He said that he would investigate the possibility of the Forum using such software. **Action: Gerry Lawson**

Photo gallery on the website: Paul Burgess noted that it was still the intention to maintain a photo gallery of agroforestry systems in the British Isles on the website, and anyone with appropriately labelled photographs should contact him or Alan Sibbald.

8) Election of the committee

According to the constitution, nominations for election to the Executive Committee with one proposer and one seconder have to be received in writing by the secretary two weeks before the AGM. The following nominations were received:

	Nomination	Proposed	Seconded
Secretary	Paul Burgess	Gerry Lawson	Tony Waterhouse
Member	John Holland	Tony Waterhouse	Paul Burgess

The meeting agreed unanimously to re-elect Paul Burgess and John Holland to the Executive Committee. Hence currently, we have 10 trustees, the maximum possible number.

9) 2008 Forum Meeting, Aberfeldy, Perthshire, Scotland

Mike Strachan reported briefly on progress in organising the 2008 Forum Meeting near Aberfeldy in Perthshire. A new series of woodland grants had recently been made available in the area covering both livestock exclusion and inclusion, and three sites had been identified for silvopastoral trials to be planted in 2007/08. There was also an option to look at pre-historic and medieval wood pasture sites. It was agreed that Mike Strachan should confirm the dates for the meeting to the membership as soon as possible. **Action: Mike Strachan**

10) 2009 Forum Meeting, National Forest, Derbyshire

Hugh Williams had provided a written update on the 2009 Meeting. He anticipated a one to two day meeting. It was planned to use the accommodation of the new National Forest Youth Hostel (80 bed, centrally located in the forest and wood heated). Possible themes could include: silvicultural innovation, new landscapes (such as Buffalo grazed parkland), the transition from farming to woodland owning, and development of profitable farm woodlands. He anticipated that the meeting would be self-funding and members of the National Forest would allocate their time without cost. **Action: Hugh Williams**

11) 2010 Forum Meeting

No decision was taken as to the possible location of the 2010 Forum meeting.

12) Any other business

Lynton Incoll noted that he had an extensive collection of material from various Farm Woodland Meetings that could be centrally archived. It was proposed that anyone with such material could lodge the material with the secretary of the Forum.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 8.30 p.m.

P.J. Burgess
Secretary
10 July 2007