

**Provisional Minutes of the
Farm Woodland Forum
Annual General Meeting
8 p.m. Wednesday 5 June 2019
at New County Hotel, Perth**



Present: Helen Chesshire, Eugene Curran, Heidi Hoffmann, John Holland (Treasurer), Matt Jordon, Ian Lane, Jim McAdam, Tim Pagella, João Palma, David Pilbeam, Rafael Pompa, Imogen Rabone, Ben Raskin, Rowan Reid, Jo Smith, Tom Staton, Mike Strachan (Chairman), Sally Westaway, Georgina Weston

Apologies: Paul Burgess, Gerry Lawson, Ian Short

The meeting started with a moment silence to remember Martin Wolfe.

1. Minutes

The Minutes of the 2018 Annual General Meeting of 10 July 2018 at Launde Abbey, England available on the [Farm Woodland Forum website](#) were approved.

2. Matters arising

There are no specific items arising from the previous minutes that do not appear elsewhere in the Agenda.

3. Chairman's report

Mike Strachan invited Jo Smith/Helen Chesshire/Ben Raskin, Tim Pagella, Eugene Curran and Jim McAdam to provide updates on the situation regarding agroforestry in England, Wales, Ireland and Northern Ireland respectively, and then provided an update for Scotland himself.

The Woodland Trust, the Forestry Commission and an un-named organisation had submitted proposals on agroforestry to Defra under the Future for Food, Farming and the Environment consultation, but all had been turned down. The Woodland Trust were encouraged to re-submit their application, but Defra are now looking to restructure the process. They are still looking for support for the concept of public funds for public goods, but future developments are uncertain. It is not clear if farmers will be paid for actions or outputs. The Agroforestry Handbook will be available in 6-9 weeks, and will be launched in September. The digital version will be live, so it can be easily updated.

Tim Pagella reported that there are very ambitious aspirations for tree planting in Wales of 60,000-100,000 ha by 2030, probably largely by afforestation but to also include significant agroforestry. The Glastir programme still has an agroforestry component included (although this does not fund fencing and has very low uptake – more likely most agroforestry is in the form of shelterbelt creation using standard grants), and last year the uptake was only 2 ha. Coed Cymru and other organisations are still providing support for agroforestry, but Welsh Government input is low as their energy is engaged

with Brexit. Tim Pagella has been asked to provide them with a definition of agroforestry.

Eugene Curran explained that the rate of woodland planting in Ireland is still declining, and last year only 4,000 ha of trees were planted. However, the agroforestry planting grants have proved to be popular, and up to 30 landowners are currently in the approval process. Proposals regarding farm agroforestry and poultry are particularly common, but also there are applications for agroforestry with sheep and with silage production. It is helpful that there are agroforestry demonstration plots to show people. Environmental issues with agriculture are prominent currently, and the government see tree planting as a mechanism to try and lower emissions from agriculture and pollution. There are now enough agroforesters from Ireland to form their own national branch with EURAF, and this has been established. They have 3 representatives on the EURAF committee (Eugene Curran, Ian Short and Jim McAdam). Jim McAdam reported that 45 farmers have so far taken up the agroforestry component of the Environmental Farming Scheme. The future of the Loughgall trial site has been looking uncertain, but there is now a four-year project on ammonia emissions starting which will utilise the site.

Mike Strachan reported that he is trying to persuade the Scottish Government to make changes to the agroforestry regulations (for example, the small and farm woodland schemes should include an agroforestry component). It would be useful to have more flexibility in the regulations, so that farmers who planted areas with trees poorly simply to maximise grant income could introduce grazing under these trees whilst replacing the area involved with good plantings. Funding is currently available until December 2020, and the Scottish Government is expecting new schemes to operate from 2022.

4. Secretary's report

Paul Burgess submitted a written report that was summarised by David Pilbeam.

Gerry Lawson, Jo Smith and Paul Burgess represented FWF at a series of Skype meetings of the European Agroforestry Federation during the year. Jo Smith is the Secretary of EURAF. The 5th European Agroforestry Conference is due to be held in Sardinia, Italy, from Monday 18th to Wednesday 20th May 2020. The EURAF membership fee remains at 10 Euros for a member of a national institution (such as the Farm Woodland Forum), and there must be a minimum contribution of 100 Euros by the members of a national institution.

A successful 4th World Agroforestry Congress was held at Montpellier, France, from 20 to 22 May 2019. The meeting saw the establishment of the International Union of Agroforestry (IUAF) which will act as an umbrella organisation for agroforestry. The form of the Union has still to be established. Members can register independently with IUAF, but at some future date it may be possible for the Farm Woodland Forum to register as a member institution.

As of 3 June 2019 there were 185 contacts on the Farm Woodland Forum JISCmail list, up 31 from last year. Use of the JISCmail service (87 postings) was high during the year.

The topics covered included tributes to Martin Wolfe, the growth of witch hazel, agroforestry equipment, and the agroforestry briefing in parliament.

Section G.3 of the Farm Woodland Forum constitution reads “members of the Executive Committee shall not hold office for longer than three years before offering themselves for re-election but must retire after six years.” Although it would be good for new members to serve on the Executive Committee, there has been a lack of nominations in recent years. It may therefore become advantageous to remove “but must retire after six years” from the constitution.

Paul reported that he had submitted the 2017-2018 Farm Woodland Forum Charity Commission Annual Return and Trustee Update on Friday 14 December 2018.

The constitution was discussed in the light of Paul’s concerns. It was considered that changes could not be made at the current AGM as members had not been given sufficient notice of any proposed changes. The members present could see the advantages of changing the constitution to remove the limit of six years’ service of Executive Committee members, but they did not want to limit possibilities for new members of the committee to be appointed nor to pressurise existing members of the committee to stay on longer than their other commitments would really allow.

It was proposed that: A small working group of the members should be set up to consider the constitution in light of these issues, and that proposals for any changes should be put to an EGM of the members for approval (possibly by Skype).

The motion was carried *nem com*.

Action: Paul Burgess

5. Treasurer and Membership Secretary’s report

John Holland (Treasurer) reported that during 2018-2019, the Farm Woodland Forum had 44 paid ordinary members and 9 student members, and 22 EURAF members.

John Holland presented the Forum’s accounts from 1 April 2018 to 31 March 2019. The balance on 1 April 2018 was £5315.45. The key expenditure was the cost of the 2018 conference lunches (£769.44) and bursaries for attending EURAF meetings (2 farmers supported to attend the Nijmegen meeting) and FWF meetings (1 student supported to attend the 2019 meeting) (total £1,012.85), and the key income was the receipt of conference fees (£2,008.00). The closing balance for the end of the year was £6,020.97. The intention of the Forum is not to accumulate funds unnecessarily, so this year 3 students were given bursaries to attend the annual FWF meeting. This will be reported in the 2019/2020 accounts.

John Holland reported that following the enquiry by Harriet Bell about the investment policy of the Bank of Scotland at the 2018 AGM he had made enquiries about this and

the bank's anti-slavery policy. No reply has yet been received from the bank, other than an insistence that the request for this information has to be made in writing.

Action: John Holland

Regarding the question of Farm Woodland Forum members paying their membership on-line or through bank transfers, the bank confirmed that this is possible but that it has a monthly fee plus a fee for every transaction for this facility. It was considered that the number of transactions required would be too small to make this economically viable. Other options, including payment by PayPal are to be investigated.

Action: John Holland

Statement of the account from 1 April 2018 to 31 March 2019

	Amount (£)
Opening balance (1 April 2018)	5,315.45
Income	
FWF membership subscriptions (44 ordinary; 9 students)	447.00
EURAF Membership subscriptions (22 members)	220.00
Conference fees (registration and meals)	2,008.00
TOTAL INCOME	2,675.00
Expenditure	
Conference costs (lunches)	769.44
Bursaries for attending EURAF and FWF meetings	1,012.85
Transfer of funds to EURAF	187.19
TOTAL EXPENDITURE	1,969.48
Closing balance (31 March 2019)	6,020.97

6. Communication Officer's report

Sally Westaway reported that the Farm Woodland Forum Twitter account (<https://twitter.com/farmwoodforum>) had been active, with double the number of Tweets from the previous year. The top Tweet (by Ella Sparks of Dartington, on walnut) had 2½ thousand impressions. The Facebook page had not proved so popular. If any member is a keen Facebook user, and is willing to manage the Facebook page to increase its popularity, please contact Sally (sally.w@organicresearchcentre.com).

As well as the JISCMail list, the Farm Woodland Forum uses a Mail Chimp list. Both lists have a similar number of subscribers (and, in both cases, numbers that are increasing).

7. Election of the Executive Committee

Based on the setting up of a sub-group to consider the constitution (item 4), the elections were held in abeyance.

8. Future meetings

Tim Pagella agreed to host a meeting in North Wales in 2020. Ben Raskin offered the possibility of a conference at Eastbrook Farm, Wiltshire, in 2021. Eugene Curran and Jim McAdam offered to host a conference in Ireland in 2022.

9. Any other business

Ben Raskin circulated a discussion document on seeking future funding for agroforestry (attached). It was agreed that the Farm Woodland Forum should maintain itself at the centre of developments. Comments on the document from members should be sent to Ben (braskin@soilassociation.org) or Jo Smith (jo.s@organicresearchcentre.com).

P.Burgess@cranfield.ac.uk

2 July 2019