

**Minutes of the
Farm Woodland Forum
Annual General Meeting
on 23 June 2004
at the Sun Inn, Newton Reigny,
near Newton Rigg Campus, Penrith**



Present: Rachel Avery, Paul Burgess (Secretary), David Corry, Alec Dauncey, Tom Dutson, John Holland, Lynton Incoll (Chairman), Gerry Lawson (Vice-Chairman), Jim McAdam, Ewan Nugent, David Pilbeam, Peter Quelch, Roger Sheldrick, Alan Sibbald, Ritchie Tassel, Zewge Teklehaimanot, R Thompson, and Tony Waterhouse (Treasurer).

Apologies: Arnold Beaton, Mark Malins, Steve Newman, Patrick Norris, Fergus Sinclair, Lucy Sumsion.

The meeting started at 7.30 pm.

- 1) **Appointment of the chairman of the meeting**
Gerry Lawson agreed to act as the chairman of the meeting.
- 2) **Minutes of the 2003 Annual General Meeting at Crianlarich**
The minutes of the AGM of 24 June 2003 were accepted as being a true record of the meeting (proposer, Tony Waterhouse; seconder, Tom Dutson).
- 3) **Matters arising on the minutes**
The key items arising from the minutes were to be raised as agenda items in the meeting.
- 4) **Chairman's report**
Lynton Incoll made the following Chairman's report.

Charitable status

The last twelve months may turn out to be a turning point in the history of the Forum. At Crianlarich last June, members recognised the change in emphasis in UK research on woody species and in the interests of its members and voted to change the name of the Forum from the UK Agroforestry Forum to the Farm Woodland Forum, though resolving that agroforestry would still remain one of its strong interests. Members also supported the Executive Committee's proposal that the Forum should apply to register as a charity. This has required the Executive Committee to explain to the whole membership the rationale behind this proposal, to prepare a constitution as an unincorporated association and to prepare an application to the Charity Commissioners to register as a charity. The three documents, rationale, new constitution and application, were publicised in February this year to the membership via our new JISCmail mailing list. Disappointingly there was absolutely no response from members to what has been a major commitment for me. This means one of two things, the membership couldn't care less or it believes that the committee is doing the right thing but can't be bothered to say so. I hope that it is the latter, for otherwise the Forum has no future. We will find out at this AGM when the constitution and application are put to the vote.

I wish to express my thanks at this point to Agroforestry Forum founder member, Steve Newman, for his important contribution in setting the Forum on the new course of becoming a charity; the more so as he has decided to resign from the Executive committee after this meeting.

Communications, membership and recruitment

1. Website

I decided that the website, though comprehensive and full of information, was not particularly 'friendly' to browsers searching for specific information. In response our webmaster and web site designer, Alan Sibbald, completely redesigned the site and, with the help of committee members, added new pages. He has done an excellent job. I hope you find it more useful and easier to use.

2. JISCmail List

In anticipation of the need to canvass members about the proposal for registering as a charity, I decided to set up a mailing list for the Forum membership. I felt also that we needed a place to which committee members could send messages to members but where members could respond and express their views to the whole membership. A JISCmail list was established called "Farm Woodland Forum" and all members were subscribed. The birth of the list was almost a disaster because messages with large attachments were sent to the list and clogged the mail queues of users with slow modem connections to the internet. They panicked, did not read the message which told them how to unsubscribe and sent unsubscribe messages to the whole list almost creating a chain reaction. One of the list owners, the Secretary, Paul Burgess, converted the list to being moderated i.e. all messages are moderated by moderators, himself and me, before being released to the list. Regrettably the list has proved to be beyond the understanding of many of the membership. Most of the messages sent to it should not have been. The messages are usually intended for one person, not for the whole membership. Moderation has proved essential, regrettably for Paul and me because it means extra work that we can do without. However I believe that we must provide ways for members to feel that the Farm Woodland Forum is an active group and that they have way of participating in it, so we will persevere.

3. Membership

The initiation of the JISCmail mailing list, though of limited success, showed that what appeared to be an impressive membership of over two hundred and twenty people was probably overstated by 50 people. Many of those who dropped out had been retired for many years and were never likely to actively support the group by attending meetings or making their views known to the Forum membership. Some of these people have been retained, at their request, on the "contacts" list of the Forum - a list of people which exists only to inform them by email of the annual meeting of the Forum. It is encouraging to see that people are still joining the Forum.

The AGM this year will consider a proposal that we have an annual subscription for members. Although I understand that taking out a subscription is a way of expressing one's support for an organisation, I am fearful that the institution of a subscription will leave us with little more than the executive committee as members. I see little evidence of a groundswell of support for the Forum. I hope that I will be proved wrong. One of the consequences of registering as a charity is that, to qualify, we have to have a gross income of £1000 per annum. A membership subscription is of course one way of raising funds to run the Forum. There are other ways of raising funds. A sub-committee of the Executive Committee has been charged with investigating fund raising but has yet to present its report.

Publications

1. Newsletter

Our publications officer, Fergus Sinclair, with the full support of the Executive Committee, undertook to publish the first issue of a new Newsletter for members in March. It has not appeared.

2. Recruitment brochure

In recognition that we need to publicise the Forum outside its present restricted circle, I initiated the development of a leaflet for recruiting members. Alan Sibbald 'ran' with this project and we completed a colour leaflet (2-sided, one A4 folded to A5) that has been already used - a black and

white copy (we could not afford to print in colour) has been put in the wallets of the 180 delegates to the ALAE symposium at Cirencester this June. We think it looks good and hope that it proves effective in recruiting members. I wish to record here my personal thanks to Alan for his continuing exemplary support of the Forum by action, not just in his capacity as Webmaster, but in ways like this. He does more for the Forum than anyone else despite being retired. We are indebted to him.

Consultations, strategy and policy

1. Consultations

We have participated in just two consultations this year. The Forestry Commission in England and DEFRA published a public consultation on future incentives for the sustainable management and creation of woodlands entitled 'The English Woodland Grant Scheme' (www.forestry.gov.uk/ewgs). The closing date for responses was 14th January 2004 and Paul Burgess prepared our response with help from Tony Waterhouse, Patrick Norris and Alan Sibbald. Disappointingly the subsequent conclusion of the consultation was that the provisional document for the EWGS required minimal change.

On issues of CAP reform, Alan Sibbald and Tony Waterhouse specifically responded to the Scottish Executive on the 'Good Agricultural and Environmental Conditions' (GAEC) which mentioned many farm woodland issues. Gerry Lawson had leave from DEFRA to respond on the same issues after the official deadline for the English consultation and will do so by the end of the Penrith meeting.

At the 2003 AGM, Paul Burgess reported on the FC/DEFRA Review of Woodland Creation in England. Following the closing date for submissions in August 2002, the independent Steering Group published its response in April 2003, which was broadly positive towards agroforestry (page 63), noting its benefits in terms of carbon sequestration. However the subsequent response from the Forestry Commission and DEFRA was generally negative, being primarily based on the argument that there was not a simple mechanism for funding agroforestry systems. (In August 2003, Paul Burgess and Lynton Incoll, with colleagues within the silvoarable network, had submitted a final contract report to DEFRA addressing these issues.)

Regrettably the Forum did not participate in the Forestry Commission's 'Forest Research' consultations across the country in May or in the regional fora that have been created to produce a strategy for each region in England.

2. Strategy

A paper with the title 'Policy support for agroforestry in the European Union will be presented by Gerry Lawson to the World Congress of Agroforestry at Orlando, Florida, on 28 June. It includes inputs from England, Wales, Scotland, Northern Ireland, Spain, Italy, the Netherlands Greece, and Germany. The paper will draw on the Forum's strategy papers for Wales, England, Scotland and Northern Ireland.

3. Policy

A statement on the eligibility of agroforestry for the single farm payment has been prepared by the SAFE project. It is a few days late for adoption and submission by the Forum to the 'cross-compliance' consultation, but will still be accepted by DEFRA.

Relations with European Agroforesters

Agroforestry is well developed in France. The Chamber of Agriculture (equivalent of the NFU but with a greater research role) has participated in the European Union SAFE Project and lobbied successfully for agroforestry to be eligible for forestry, agricultural and agri-environmental payments. The French Ministry for agriculture and forestry now backs agroforestry at a senior level not seen elsewhere in Europe. The French are now considering establishment of an informal

organisation similar to the Farm Woodland Forum, but retaining 'agroforestry' in the title. No other country in Europe has this intention yet, but the SAFE project has partners in Spain, Italy, Greece, Netherlands and Germany. Traditional agroforestry remains an important practice in some of the new member states, and efforts are underway to develop contacts.

Ladies and gentlemen, this is my second report as chairman. Like the first it is pessimistic. I hope that by the next annual general meeting it will prove to have been too pessimistic.

5) Matters arising from the Chairman's report

Jim McAdam noted that e-mails from the JISCmail mailing list were screened by a firewall at his institutions. Gerry Lawson remarked that it was often possible to have a specific source address exempted from screening if computer support personnel are informed of the problem.

Gerry Lawson thanked Lynton, on behalf of the membership, for his report and the large amount of work that he had undertaken as Chairman during the past year.

6) Secretary's report

Paul Burgess reported that there were 229 people (220 with access to e-mail) on the Farm Woodland Forum contact list. At the end of June, there were 179 members subscribed on the Farm Woodland Forum JISCmail mailing list.

The Forum had recently received a number of copies of the 37-page guide entitled "Create a Farm Woodland" from Hugh Vaughn Williams of the National Forest Company. The booklet's aim is to describe farm woodland creation in lowland England and copies of the guide had been made available at the Forum meeting earlier that day. Paul Burgess explained that the Forestry Commission had expressed an interest in a similar booklet to be targeted for upland areas. He felt that if there was interest, it would be good if the Farm Woodland Forum could contribute to such a booklet. He asked members to look through the guide and to contact him at <P.Burgess@cranfield.ac.uk> suggesting changes needed to make the guide applicable to upland areas.

Action: Paul Burgess to remind attending Farm Woodland Forum members to respond

7) Treasurer's report

Tony Waterhouse presented an interim treasurer's report for 2003/04. The key features of the report were:

- i) The Forum now has a bank account.
- ii) During the past year, the income included £809.88 from previous Forum meetings.
- iii) Since opening the account, there had only been a very limited amount of interest and expenditure (see table below).

Statement of the interim account as at 16 April 2004

Opening balance	£0.00
Income	
Meeting surplus from previous years	£809.88
Bank interest	£3.07
Expenditure	
Expenses	£14.35
Closing balance	£798.60

- iv) Later in the AGM there would be a proposal that subscriptions should become payable for membership of the Farm Woodland Forum. If agreed, then this would yield additional income for the Forum.

- v) It proposed that for this year, the first set of accounts should run until October (12 months after the opening of the bank account) when the Executive Committee will be responsible for their interim acceptance. Then the 2004/2005 account year will end at the AGM. Hence both the final 2003/04 and 2004/05 audited accounts will be available at the AGM in 2005.

The above treasurer's report and his recommendations were accepted by the AGM.

7) **Subscription**

Tony Waterhouse proposed two motions:

- a) "an annual subscription be payable for membership of the Forum".
- b) "that the annual subscription for the year 2004/05 be £10 for full members, and £1 for full-time students, with immediate effect".

Roger Sheldrick asked if it was possible to Gift Aid the membership fee. Tony Waterhouse replied that this might be possible in the future if the Forum obtained charitable status. David Pilbeam asked if the membership fee could be included within the registration costs of future forum meetings. It was noted that this might be possible. A vote was then taken on each motion, and the support was unanimous in each case.

8) **New constitution**

Lynton Incoll outlined the case that "the Farm Woodland Forum adopts the new constitution described in the document 'FarmWoodlandForumConstitution.doc', which has been made available to members". In February 2004, members were informed of and given access to the proposed new constitution, when it was placed on the Forum's JISMail web site - <http://www.jiscmail.ac.uk/lists/farm-woodland-forum.html>. It is based on the Charity Commission's "Model Constitution for a Charitable Unincorporated Association (GD3)" as proposed in the Executive Committee's report "The Executive Committee's proposal for applying for charitable status for the Farm Woodland Forum" which was also made available at the same JISMail web site.

Lynton Incoll described the key features of the new constitution. A vote in support of the motion was proposed by Tony Waterhouse and seconded by David Pilbeam. The motion was carried unanimously.

9) **Application for charitable status**

Lynton Incoll outlined the key points in support of the motion "that the Farm Woodland Forum applies to the Charity Commission to register as a charity following the 'governance as an unincorporated association' model". The background to an application for charitable status had been provided to members in February 2004 in the document entitled "The Executive Committee's proposal for applying for charitable status for the Farm Woodland Forum".

A vote in support of the motion was recommended by the Executive Committee and seconded by Roger Sheldrick. The motion was carried by a unanimous show of hands.

Gerry Lawson thanked Lynton Incoll on behalf of the membership for the large amount of work that he had put into developing the new constitution and the application for charitable status.

10) **Election of the committee**

Nominations for the executive committee, with named positions of Chairman, Vice-Chairman, Secretary and Treasurer had been received by the secretary. Each nomination for membership of the Executive Committee had been proposed and seconded by another member. They were:

Lynton Incoll (Chairman)	John Holland
Gerry Lawson (Vice-Chairman)	Lucy Sumsion
Paul Burgess (Secretary)	Patrick Norris
Tony Waterhouse (Treasurer)	Zewge Teklehaimanot
Tom Dutson	

It was noted that the Executive Committee members would become trustees of the Forum, if the application for charitable status was successful. It was also noted that Steve Newman had indicated his wish to resign from the Executive Committee. The above committee was elected by unanimous vote.

Postscript: subsequent to the meeting, Patrick Norris indicated that due to a lack of support from his line-manager, he will have to resign from the Executive Committee.

11) 2005 Forum Meeting

Zewge Teklehaimanot confirmed that the next meeting would be hosted by the University of North Wales, Bangor, at the University of Wales Conference Centre at Gregynog, Powys. The provisional theme for the meeting was "Ecosystem services for trees". Lynton Incoll noted that it would be a disaster for the Forum if the meeting did not occur, and he asked Zewge to confirm the date and arrangements for the meetings so that details could be sent to the membership before the end of July.

Action: Zewge Teklehaimanot

12) 2006 Forum Meeting

Paul Burgess reported that Steve Newman was still interested in hosting the 20th Anniversary Meeting of the Farm Woodland Forum in Buckinghamshire in 2006. Lynton Incoll again noted that Steve should start making arrangements for this meeting immediately, including deciding on a provisional date.

Action: Steve Newman

13) Post-2006 meetings

Jim McAdam offered to host the 2007 Forum Meeting in Northern Ireland.

Action: Jim McAdam

14) Any other business

Lynton Incoll thanked Tom Dutson and Iris Cheshire for their hard work in preparing and hosting the Farm Woodland Forum meeting at Newton Rigg. There being no further business, the meeting closed at 8.35 pm.

P.J. Burgess
Secretary
12 July 2004