



Wales Land Management Forum (WLMF)

Minutes

Title of meeting: Wales Land Management Forum (WLMF)

Location: Ceredigion Council Offices, Aberystwyth

Date of Meeting: 10th May 2019

Present:

Zoe Henderson (NRW Board Member & WLMF Chairperson)

Hedd Pugh (NFU Cymru)

Rachel Lewis-Davies (NFU Cymru)

Tudur Parry (FUW)

Bernard Griffiths (FUW Land Use Policy Officer)

Dennis Matheson (Tenant Farmers Association)

Marc Williams (NRW)

Martyn Evans (Head of South West Wales Operations, NRW)

Helen Haider (NRW)

Additional Attendees Present: none

Secretariat(s):

Helen Haider (WLMF Agri-pollution Co-ordinator, NRW)

Marc Williams (WLMF Agri-Pollution Co-ordinator, NRW)

Apologies:

Ruth Jenkins (Head of Natural Resource Management Policy)

Ceri Davies (NRW Executive Director for Evidence, Policy and Permitting)

Anthony Geddes (Confor)

Tim Kirk (Confor)

Sian Thomas (Young Farmers Association)

Bob Vaughan (Sustainable Land Farming & Forest Manager, NRW)

Chris Blake, (NRW Board Member)

Russell De'Ath (NRW)

Nia Lloyd (Young Farmers Association)

Michelle Van-Velzen (NRW).

Item 1 Introductions and apologies

1. Zoe Henderson welcomed Marc Williams, NRW to the forum. There were a number of apologies from NRW and YFC Cymru and Confor representatives were unable to attend also.

Item 2 Minutes from the last meeting and any matters arising

2. There were no amendments to the minutes of the last meeting on 6th February and these have now been placed onto the WLMF webpage on the NRW website.
3. In relation to Action Point 7 from the last meeting on 6th February (Circulate contact details of NRW's key forestry managers to all WLMF members), the forestry managers names were provided verbally to members with a contact list to be circulated.
4. In relation to Action Point 8 from the previous meeting on 6th February, it has not been confirmed yet by the Wales Water Management Forum (WWMF) who will be providing updates to the WLMF.
5. As no forestry sector representative was able to attend the meeting, updates on progress regarding Action Points 12-16 from the last meeting on 6th February could not be provided.

AP May 01: Provide updates in relation to outstanding actions points from the last WLMF meeting on 6th February (All)

Item 3 Terms of Reference and Membership

6. Prior to the meeting, a draft Terms of Reference (ToR) document was circulated to members. No issues were raised with the content of the ToR and the final document will be published on the WLMF webpage.
7. Prior to his retirement, Brian Pawson received a request from Emyr Williams, Snowdonia National Park (SNP) to join the WLMF. A discussion took place regarding the request, whether to expand the membership of the forum and whether the National Park met the conditions of the ToR. The WLMF was originally established for NRW to

share information with members who represent farmers and landowners. Organisations participating in the WLMF represent members who are directly involved in managing land as detailed in the ToR document. Previous requests from organisations who work with farmers have been refused on the basis that they do not represent farmers. It was agreed that the details of the request from Emyr Williams be circulated to members and that a final decision regarding their membership would be made at September's WLMF meeting. In the interim, a holding response will be sent to Emyr Williams.

8. Discussion took place around the benefit of a representative from Welsh Government's (WG) land management department attending a future WLMF meeting, anticipating the far-reaching July WG consultation following the 'Brexit and Our Land' consultation.

AP May 02: Draft holding response to Emyr Williams, SNP regarding their request to join the WLMF (Zoe Henderson/Ruth Jenkins, NRW)

AP May 03: Circulate details of Emyr Williams', SNP request to WLMF members (Helen Haider, NRW)

AP May 04: Ensure membership of the WLMF is on the agenda for the next WLMF meeting (Helen Haider/Marc Williams, NRW)

AP May 05: Identify and invite a senior WG land management representative who can attend the next WLMF to set overall policy position, including July land management consultation (Bob Vaughan, NRW)

Item 4 NRW Update

9. **Organisation Design:** The implementation of the new NRW structure will take place on 1st July 2019. The majority of NRW's c1,800 staff will be in their new roles by July. The intention of the re-organisation is to better align NRW to the new legislation (the Wellbeing & Future Generations Act and the Environment (Wales) Act) in Wales that came in after NRW was established, resilience against future funding challenges and integration. There are significant changes to the Operations and Land Management areas of the business with some changes in team leader and senior roles in Woodland Management. A good depth of land management technical expertise has been retained. Sasha Wyn-Davies will be joining NRW on 1st July as Head of the Commercial Team, having formerly worked for Horizon. A Head of Land Stewardship is currently being recruited and will be NRW's fifth Head of Policy, responsible for NRW's land holdings, forest and flood assets.

It was highlighted that the intention of NRW's re-organisation was not to lose staff and that the process will enable many staff to develop their careers. The benefit of knowing who staff are within technical teams was raised. The broad details of these technical staff are available, but it was agreed that a full structure would be presented at the next WLMF meeting with details circulated to members as soon as they have been confirmed.

A discussion took place regarding what considerations NRW had taken to ensure topics and expertise are linked across the organisation to avoid staff working in silos. Martyn Evans explained that the re-structuring won't achieve this alone and that steps were being taken to develop links across the business and models from others (e.g.

SEPA) had been considered to take on board learning points. Martyn Evans clarified that NRW's role is to pursue and contribute to the Sustainable Management of Natural Resources (SMNR), not just to regulate and that this would require collaborative working. A query was raised as to whether NRW's budget was secured. It was confirmed that NRW's budgets is not protected during austerity but that there were positive signs that the budget lines would be considered positively by WG. NRW is also developing commercial income to offset Grant in aid pressures to plough back into its work.

AP May 06: Circulate details of NRW staff tiers now in post to WLMF members (Martyn Evans)

AP May 07: Update members on the full NRW structure at the next WLMF meeting (Bob Vaughan/Martyn Evans)

10. **Policy Update:** A query was raised as to whether NRW are engaged with the Environmental Governance and Principles Post-EU Brexit consultation. The consultation considers whether there should be oversight of NRW and discussion took place whether there should be a standalone body to ensure NRW is acting appropriately.

AP May 08: Clarify whether NRW will be responding to the Environmental Governance & Principles Post-EU Brexit consultation (Bob Vaughan).

AP May 09: If NRW is responding to the Environmental Governance & Principles Post-EU Brexit consultation, share response with members (Ruth Jenkins/Bob Vaughan)

11. **Water Update:** A discussion took place regarding plastics. NRW will recruit a Marine Plastics/Litter staff member who will be asked to attend the next Wales Water Management Forum (WWMF). Tudur Parry raised concerns that farm plastics cannot currently be recycled and are going to landfill, costing between £80-£110 per tonne. The demand for farm plastics from China and Malaysia is no longer present. There are plants in the U.K. which can recycle farm plastics but cannot manage the quantity being generated. It was highlighted that pressure needs to be placed on the suppliers to reduce the amount of plastic packaging.

12. **PR19 Water Company Planning:** Every five years, Ofwat (the economic regulator) sets price limits that enable water companies to finance the delivery of services to customers, in line with relevant environmental standards and requirements. Ofwat's current price review (PR19) will conclude in 2019.

NRW is working with Welsh Government, Ofwat, Welsh Water (DCWW) and Hafren Dyfrdwy (HD) throughout the PR19 process to ensure priorities for the sustainable management of natural resources are addressed.

DCWW and HD submitted their PR19 business plans to Ofwat in September. Both companies plan to make significant investments to address their environmental impacts in the period 2020-24, including sewage treatment work improvements to meet Natura 2000/Water Framework Directive (WFD) water quality requirements, investigations and measures to reduce spills from combined sewer overflows, improvements to fish

passage, investigations to better understand the risk from invasive non-native species, and changes to flows downstream of reservoirs. DCWW's plan includes a commitment to four catchment pilots (Afan, Teifi, Clwyd and Alyn) which will explore innovative and collaborative solutions.

The overarching approach to the third cycle of river basin planning has been set out in the Working Together Consultation, which closed in December 2018. NRW asked for feedback on the work programme, timetable and process for working together. A summary of responses will be included in the Significant Water Management Issues consultation later this year.

The consultation on the Significant Water Management Issues will be published in June 2019 for a 6-month consultation. The approach to this was discussed at the WWMF in April, a draft copy of the document will be shared with the WWMF later in May.

13. **Water Framework Directive:** NRW is developing its approach to targeting in the 3rd WFD cycle and are exploring doing this at a catchment/sub-catchment level and integration with the Area Statement process.

For cycle 3 NRW aims to achieve a placed-based SMNR approach to catchment prioritisation that also delivers WFD outcomes. In accordance with the Well-Being of Future Generation Act and the Environment Act NRW needs to shift away from a WFD compliance led model to more integrated and sustainable catchment outcomes. This would mean benefits for water and water dependant habitats/species aligned with well-being benefits and public participation over the long term.

AP May 10: Circulate written WWMF update to WLMF members (Helen Haider/Marc Williams)

14. **SoNaRR:** NRW are developing the content for SoNaRR2 which will take shape this year and an interim report will be submitted to WG in December 2019 with a view to publishing in December 2020. A webinar has been arranged for the 20th May for members to engage with SoNaRR2 and details to take part in this have been circulated to the group.

Ammonia/Intensive Agriculture: Zoe Henderson opened this item by explaining that intensive agriculture is sometimes considered in a negative light. Intensive units are highly regulated and are not always responsible for impacts on the environment and that sometimes smaller, unregulated units can cause problems in terms of pollution (whether individually or in combination).

NRW will prepare and publish a GIS layer/map of ammonia-sensitive ancient woodlands, based on recent records of sensitive lichens and bryophytes. NRW will also publish an ammonia action plan this year and guidance on intensive agriculture developments. Members requested more information regarding the action plan and guidance and whether they are complementary to other ammonia related work in WG such as the Code of Good Agricultural Practise (CoGAP): Reducing Ammonia Emissions.

Project work is being undertaken within NRW to establish an evidence base for the pollution arising from ammonia emissions of livestock farming in Wales. A model has

been developed to show the effects of applying abatement measures to various farm types and sizes. The final report of this project work is not yet available but will be circulated to the group as soon as possible.

AP May 11: Provide additional detail to members regarding the ammonia action plan/guidance on intensive agriculture developments (Simon Bareham, NRW)

AP May 12: Establish the interaction of the intensive agriculture project work with other ammonia work undertaken by WG (Alison Soper, NRW)

AP May 13: Share Intensive Agriculture reports to members once available (Helen Haider, NRW)

Dennis Matheson raised concerns that the outcomes of the project work will result in further regulation for farmers without focussing on the public goods farmers provide. Zoe Henderson highlighted the importance of using evidence to inform decision making.

15. **Beavers:** NRW is finalising the River Wye beaver survey report. There have been recent news reports about beavers receiving full legal protection in Scotland. At present this does not apply to Wales and NRW has asked WG what their intention is in relation to protection of beavers in Wales. There is currently no change in the status of beavers in Wales until such a time that WG/Defra decide to add them to the Habitats Regulations. NFU Cymru raised that the report should not just identify whether beavers are present but what the next steps are for example in terms of biosecurity. NFU Cymru also highlighted that should the introduction of eagles be considered, that a full consultation regarding the introduction of eagles be undertaken with a suggestion of a minimum consultation period of 6 weeks.
16. **Area Statements:** A draft National WLMF Engagement Proposal was circulated to members prior to the meeting. There is a 6-month engagement period with stakeholders, incorporating members' interest to be a delivery partner for area statements. National and local area statement engagement will take place. The overall aim of the engagement with the WLMF will be to:
 - Achieve a shared vision with buy-in and participation.
 - To engage on the Natural Resources Policy & Emerging Themes
 - To help identify spatial opportunities to achieve multiple benefits.
 - To help inform local discussions and collaborative delivery.
 - To help inform the next SoNaRR and the next National Policy.

NFU Cymru highlighted that area statements are an abstract concept for their members and that other issues on the horizon such as the future land management scheme should be taken into consideration. The importance of farmers seeing the benefits of engaging with area statements was raised. Members agreed that using a third party (such as Farming Connect) to engage at the local level would help.

It was discussed as to how area statements interact with the future land management scheme. It was raised that a direct, bespoke, tailored approach to local engagement with farmers be taken. Members discussed the importance of ensuring the farming sector are up to speed with area statements. It was agreed that communication work be undertaken to develop a narrative that will encourage member engagement and to explore the potential to organise local events, perhaps again utilising a third party such as Farming Connect. NRW will be in touch with members regarding the possibility of establishing a small working group on area statements with the other NRW Heads of Place also.

AP May 14: Draft suitable narrative on the purpose of Area Statements to encourage member engagement in the process (Russell De'Ath, NRW/Rachel Lewis-Davies, NFU Cymru/Bernard Griffiths, FUU)

AP May 15: Explore the potential to organise local events for farmers to engage with area statements as part of the national engagement process (Operations Managers, NRW/Rachel Lewis-Davies, NFU Cymru/Bernard Griffiths, FUU)

AP May 16: Circulate details of sector-based area statement meetings to members (Martyn Evans, NRW)

AP May 17: Draft plan/organogram of how all the area statement engagement groups interlink (Russell De'Ath, NRW)

Item 5 General Licenses

17. Following legal challenge, Natural England have reviewed their position on general licenses. General Licences are available from NRW to provide a legal basis for people to lawfully carry out a range of activities relating to wildlife. General Licences are available to allow lethal control of specific wild birds in certain situations, such as to protect public health and safety, to protect crops and livestock or for the conservation of other species. Killing wild birds after obtaining these licences is only allowed as a last resort when all other methods have failed to solve the problem. Individuals do not need to apply for General Licences but are required by law to abide by their terms and conditions.
18. NRW are reviewing the outcome of the process in England and are consulting with their legal advisors. If NRW need to revise their approach they'll work collaboratively with stakeholders to ensure there is an effective, proportionate and lawful approach in place. There is an NRW board meeting on 22nd May to decide how this issue is approached.

Item 6 Feedback from the WLMF Agri-Pollution Sub Group

19. It was agreed that written updates from the WLMF Sub-Group would be circulated to WLMF members to avoid duplication in the sharing of information.

AP May 18: Circulate written update from the WLMF Sub-Group to members (Helen Haider, NRW)

Item 7 NRW Woodland Creation Programme

20. As no forestry representatives were able to attend the meeting, it was agreed that a written update be circulated to members.

AP May 19: Circulate woodland update to members (Helen Haider, NRW)

Item 8 Update from Water and Fisheries Fora

21. **Fisheries Forum:** The Terms of Reference for the Fisheries Forum was agreed, and membership discussed. Welsh Water are to be invited to join and the Game and Wildlife Conservation Trust are keen to join the group. An agricultural representative will be invited to attend the next Fisheries Forum meeting.

Members highlighted the importance of avoiding duplication within the different fora in particular the potential to cover issues such as agricultural pollution which are already being progressed via the WLMF Sub-Group on Agricultural Pollution. The benefit of outlining the remit of the WLMF/WLMF Sub-Group to the other fora was raised.

AP May 20: Feedback to other fora (Fisheries/Water) the remit & work of the WLMF Sub Group to avoid duplication (Zoe Henderson)

AP May 21: Attend the next Fisheries Forum meeting to describe work being undertaken by the WLMF/WLMF Sub-Group (Zoe Henderson)

22. **Wales Water Management Forum (WWMF):** The WWMF met on the 9th April and the meeting focused on the ToR for the group which was agreed. Members are keen not to duplicate roles across the various forums. Within NRW the fora co-ordinators are working to ensure the groups share outputs and approaches. The next WWMF will take place on the 4th July.

Item 9 Future Look

23. The follow-up document to the Brexit and Our Land Consultation is due to be published in July.

24. Discussion took place regarding NRW Dairy Project with feedback given regarding the officers. A full update on the project is to be given at the next WLMF Sub-Group meeting on 23rd May.

Item 10 AOB

AP May 22: Circulate details to members regarding planting in memory of Martin Bishop (Martyn Evans, NRW)

Close meeting