

Trees and Woodland Scientific Advisory Group (TAW-SAG)

Meeting 11 Minutes: 07 November 2022

Attendees:

- **Rob MacKenzie** (RMK) - [Chair], School of Geography, Earth and Environmental Sciences University of Birmingham; Birmingham Institute of Forest Research
- **Paul Burgess** (PB) - Ecology and Management, Cranfield Soil and Agri-food Institute Cranfield University
- **Keith Kirby** (KK) - Department of Biology, University of Oxford
- **Richard Buggs** (RB) - [Observer], Kew Gardens, Plant Health Group
- **Ruth Mitchell** (RM) - Biodiversity and Ecosystems Group, Ecological Sciences Department, James Hutton Institute
- **Chris Quine** (CQ) - [Observer], Chief Scientist, Forest Research
- **Julie Urquhart** (JU) - Environmental Social Science at University of Gloucestershire
- **Stephen Cavers** (SC) - Ecology Evolution and Environmental Change - Centre for Ecology and Hydrology
- **Ian Bateman** (IB) - Director of the Land, Environment, Economics and Policy Institute. University of Exeter
- **Daisy Ellis** (DE) - Head of Strategy, Engagement and Analysis, Defra
- **Rebecca McIlhiney** (RMI)- Evidence and Analysis Team Leader for Trees/ Forestry, Defra
- **Clare Williams** (CW) – Evidence and Analysis Team for Trees/Forestry, Defra
- **Charlotte Williams** (ChW) (secretary) – [Minutes], Research & Development (R&D) Project Delivery Advisor, Defra
- **Louise Hill** (LH) – [Guest] - Shared Outcomes Fund Trees Outside of Woodland project] Lead Advisor on Adaptation, Tree Health & Plant Health Evidence and Analysis, Defra
- **Dan Doherty** (DD) - [Guest] Head of Trees, Woodlands and Forestry Policy
- **Katherine Dickson** (KD) – [Guest] Team Leader for Legislation and Regulation, Defra
- **Lucy Burt** (LB) – [Guest - Impermanent Woodlands Knowledge Review] Senior Policy Advisor, Legislation and Regulation, Defra
- **Richard Bridge** (RB) – [Guest] Head of Monitoring and Evaluation, Defra
- **Gemma Shaw** (GS) - [Guest] National Biodiversity Evidence and Analysis Team, Defra

Apologies:

- **Yadvinder Malhi** (YM) - Ecosystems Research, Environmental Change Institute, Oxford University
- **Maggie Roe** (MR) - Landscape Planning Research & Policy Engagement, University of Newcastle
- **Patricia Thornley** (PT) - School of Engineering and Applied Science, Aston University
- **Mike Morecroft** (MM) - [Observer], Principal specialist on climate change, Natural England (NE) and senior visiting research associate, Oxford University
- **Bella Murfin** (BM) – Tree Programme Director, Defra
- **Naomi Matthiessen** (NM) – Tree Programme Director, Defra

Item 1: Welcome and Updates

1. RMK welcomed everyone to the eleventh meeting of the TAW-SAG.

Item 2: Review and agree minutes from previous meeting

2. The minutes from the last meeting were reviewed and agreed with no further amendments.
3. The actions were reviewed:
 - Action 1 – complete.
 - Action 2 – complete.
 - Action 3 – JU will send details of overlaps between Treescapes projects and Defra's Trees R&D projects. JU will also contact the Treescapes Agroforestry projects and Defra to arrange a meeting.
 - Action 4 – complete. This forms part of the Terms of Reference Review.
 - Action 5 – complete.
 - Action 6 – ongoing.
 - Action 7 – Complete. NERC UK Treescapes Programme Board have had discussions on the next steps to funding.
 - CQ raised a question on how to keep the Defra Chief Scientific Advisor's Office (CSAO) informed of opportunities arising. It was agreed that the TaW-SAG Chair should be alerted of points to be raised to the CSAO, via email and shall forward then on.

Action 1: JU to send overlaps sheet to Defra R&D team.

Action 2: JU to arrange a meeting with the Treescapes Agroforestry projects and Defra R&D.

Action 3: RMK to relay to the CSAO JU's point from action 7, about UKRI's strategic plans for future funding.

Item 3: New Ministerial appointments and highlights from meetings with the new SoS, Thérèse Coffey. Programme Board Update.

4. DE provided an update on the new Ministers in Defra. Their portfolios are as follows:
 - Dr Thérèse Coffey has been appointed the new SoS.
 - Rebecca Pow (Parliamentary Under SoS) – Floods, water, resources and waste, air quality and is the lead for the Environment Agency.
 - Mark Spencer (Food and Farming).
 - Lord Benyon (International).
 - Trudy Harrison (Environment) The NCF Tree programme's most relevant Minister.
5. Summary of Key Points raised in the discussion:
 - The import substitution argument for increasing woodlands is not persuasive in itself; sustainability benefits of home-grown timber needs to be foregrounded.
 - A question was raised about whether growth is still high on the current agenda, and it was made clear that even though none of the Ministers have a title for growth, it is still (and always is) an important priority for (any) Government.
6. Updates were provided from the Programme Board with the following points reported:
 - R&D spend was all approved.
 - Vacant and Derelict Land was discussed.
 - Developments on the land use framework were discussed and the team working on that have said that they can present to TAW-SAG in the New Year.

Item 4: Presentation on Defra policy for advice – For Action/ Advice

7. A Defra policy item under consideration was presented to TaW-SAG and a request made that they produce a knowledge review summarising their advice.

Actions arising from Item 4:

Action 4: ChW collate comments and share collaborative document.

Action 5: ALL Provide input to the knowledge review, with a draft document to be completed by end December 2022 and final document by end January 2023.

Action 6: ChW share details on how to claim expenses to members.

Item 5: Presentation on Shared Outcomes Fund Trees Outside of Woodland project - For information

8. LH presented on the Shared Outcomes Fund (SOF) Trees Outside of Woodland (TOW) Project. The following key points were presented:
 - The aim of this R&D project is to investigate the barriers and drivers to increasing Tree Cover.
 - The TOW programme is developing innovative and sustainable new ways to increase tree cover, to address both climate and ecological emergencies.
 - Learning will be shared to support local authorities, communities, and landowners to plant more healthy and resilient trees.
 - Pilot 1 – Trial the Miyawaki Method Miniature Woodlands in urban areas in England. Drought resilience looks positive after just over a year after planting.
 - Pilot 2 – Test uptake, costs, tree numbers and survival of trees under different tree schemes e.g. Free tree scheme, subsidised tree scheme and advice only. Scenarios tested over three planting seasons. Quantitative and qualitative data is being collected.
 - Pilot 3 – Agroforestry and Orchards. Baseline surveys found that interest is high for agroforestry, but the barriers include financial cost, concerns about access to market for additional crops, lack of labour and lack of knowledge. Capital grant schemes and expert advice and training will be tested for effectiveness. There is a strong interest in these schemes which were well received with a score of 9/10. Landowners needed a lot of support in the application process, reflecting novelty of approach for many landowners.
 - Pilot 4 – To investigate the effectiveness of different interventions aimed at increasing numbers of trees on farms. It will test uptake, cost effectiveness, survival and more. Options offered to landowners provided with grants included field corners, 'crown of thorns', enclosed bays and more. Funding for fences has been popular. Uptake varied across the options. Mulching has provided significant benefits to soil and survival rates. Simplicity is important for future grant schemes.
 - Pilot 5 – To understand the role that Community Tree Nurseries (CTN) could play in supply trees suitable for planting outside of woodland. Also looking at ways to support CTNs to have better biosecurity, and to test the uptake and effectiveness of grants to support the set up scale up or long-term sustainability of CTNs. 13 CTNs offered grants, including for Maidstone prison to support them providing trees for the local area.
 - A cost effectiveness evaluation will be completed for the project, and a statistical model will be produced.

Item 6: TAW-SAG Terms of Reference Review – For Discussion

9. This item will be pushed back to the next meeting due to time constraints.

Item 7: AOB

10. ChW thanked all for completing the survey for preferences on the face-to-face meeting in the new year. The preferred option is for a face-to-face meeting on Tuesday 14th March 2023, in Central Birmingham. It will be an all-day event to include a meeting and other informative activities afterwards, to start no earlier than 1000. The meeting will be hybrid so those that can't travel will still be able to attend.

Trees and Forestry, Strategy Engagement and Analysis Team December 2022