

Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs

Trees and Woodland Scientific Advisory Group (TAW-SAG)

Meeting 20 Minutes: 15 May 2024 10am to 12pm

Attendees

1. **Rob MacKenzie** (RMK) - [Chair], School of Geography, Earth and Environmental Sciences University of Birmingham; Birmingham Institute of Forest Research.
2. **Richard Buggs** (RB) - [Observer], Kew Gardens, Plant Health Group.
3. **Paul Burgess** (PB) - Sustainable Agriculture and Agroforestry, Cranfield Soil and Agrifood Institute, Cranfield University.
4. **Keith Kirby** (KK) - Department of Biology, University of Oxford.
5. **Mike Morecroft** (MM) - [Observer], Principal specialist on climate change, Natural England and Visiting Professor, University of Reading.
6. **Stephen Cavers** (SC) - Ecology Evolution and Environmental Change - Centre for Ecology and Hydrology.
7. **Chris Quine** (CQ) - [Observer], Chief Scientist, Forest Research.
8. **Ian Bateman** (IB) - Director of the Land, Environment, Economics and Policy Institute. University of Exeter
9. **Maggie Roe** (MR) - Landscape Planning Research & Policy Engagement, University of Newcastle
10. **Martin Lukac** (ML) – Professor of Ecosystem Science, University of Reading
11. **John Healey** (JH) – Professor of Forest Science, Bangor University
12. **Rhiannon Leyden-Preece** (RLP) - Evidence and Analysis Team for Trees/Forestry, Defra.
13. **Chris McGurk** (CM) - Evidence and Analysis Team for Trees/Forestry, Defra.
14. **Clare Williams** (CW) – Evidence and Analysis Team for Trees/Forestry, Defra.
15. **Daisy Ellis** (DE) - Head of Strategy, Engagement and Analysis, Trees/Forestry Defra.
16. **Rebecca McIlhiney** (RMI)- Evidence and Analysis Team Leader for Trees/ Forestry, Defra.
17. **Jodie Daniel** (JD) - Policy Team for Trees/Forestry, Defra.
18. **Hugh Loxton** (HL) - Policy Team for Trees/Forestry, Defra.
19. **Alex Elsy** (AE) - Evidence and Analysis Team for Trees/ Forestry, Defra.
20. **Emily Walker** (EW) - Evidence and Analysis Team for Trees/Forestry, Defra.
21. **Dan Doherty** (DD) - Head of Policy, Trees/Forestry Defra.

Apologies

1. **Ruth Mitchell** (RM) - Biodiversity and Ecosystems Group, Ecological Sciences Department, James Hutton Institute.
2. **Bella Murfin** (BM) - Director Nature for Climate Tree Programme, Defra
3. **Clive Potter** (CP) – Centre for Environmental Policy, Imperial College London.
4. **Julie Urquhart** (JU) - Environmental Social Science, University of Gloucestershire.
5. **Gideon Henderson** (GH) – Chief Scientific Advisor, Defra
6. **Patricia Thornley** (PT) - School of Engineering and Applied Science, Aston University.

Item 1: Welcome and introductions

1. RMK welcomed everyone to the 20th meeting of the TAW-SAG and introduced JD and AE.

Item 2: Review minutes from previous meeting

2. The minutes from the last meeting were agreed and the actions were reviewed:

From	Number	Action	Owner	Status
12/03/2024	1	CW to share the Analysis of uptake of different grants with TaW-SAG when possible	CW	In progress
12/03/2024	2	CW to send TAW-SAG Impermanent Forest Knowledge Review to JH and ML	CW	Complete
12/03/2024	3	TaW-SAG to provide an opinion on woodland management and natural capital (IB and MR to start the draft)	CW	In progress – paper drafted for July TaW-SAG

Item 3: Programme Board update

3. DE and RMK provided an update on the last NCF Programme Board.
4. The key points are:
 - a) There was a discussion on the comparison of woodland creation rates across the programme.
 - b) The Put Down Roots campaign is running until July and the current focus is on the England Woodland Creation Offer. *[The announcement of the General Election has since changed this campaign due to the Pre-Election Period guidelines]*
 - c) Big Nature Impact Fund and metrics
5. DE provided an update on the Land Use Framework and Spending Review.

Action 1: RMI to set up NetZeroPlus teach in for Defra

Item 4: Temperate Rainforest Research and Development strategy

6. CW introduced this item and gave a summary of the temperate rainforest strategy and the associated R&D spend. There are other organisations working on temperate rainforest R&D and a joint effort was discussed. Defra asked TaW-SAG for advice on the research questions posed.

Action 2: TaW-SAG members to send any written comments to Defra.

Action 3: Defra to update the Temperate Rainforest Research and Development Strategy and recirculate.

Item 5: Defra's Fellowship programme and Fellows joining the Evidence Team

7. RMI introduced the Defra fellowship programme and explained that the Trees Research Evidence and Analysis Team had four fellows joining to undertake inhouse research covering the following topic areas: short rotation forestry and coppice, woodlands into management, tree and woodland resilience and grey squirrel control.

Action 4: Defra to circulate the draft specifications for the research fellows' projects for comment once completed.

Item 6: TaW-SAG publishing evidence and advice

8. JH introduced this item and TaW-SAG discussed how best to publish expert advice given to Defra.

Item 7: AOB

9. CW confirmed that there will be an in-person meeting on 24 September 2024 and was discussing this with the National Forest.
10. CW introduced RM's project on resistant ash trees.
11. RMI asked for any evidence on the benefits of urban hedgerows.

Action 5: TaW-SAG to send papers on urban hedgerows to Defra

Trees and Forestry, Strategy Engagement and Analysis Team May 2024

Date of the next two meetings - 10 July 2024 and 24 September 2024 (in person).