

# Wales Squirrel Forum

## 23<sup>rd</sup> January 2006

### Present

Ruth Jenkins FCW, Patrick Green, FCW, Judith Webb, FTA (JW), Liz Halliwell, CCW (LH), Sarah Cartmel, MWRSP, Brenda Mayle, Forest Research.

### Apologies

Michelle Calnan Welsh Assembly Government, Hugh Knott, Menter Môn, Chris Wynne, North Wales Wildlife Trust, Dave Cowley, Anglesey CC, Huw Denman, ESI & MWRSP.

Dorian Moro, CEH, sent his apologies and has withdrawn from the group due to a change of job.

Chair Liz Halliwell  
Minutes Ruth Jenkins

**1. Minutes of the last meeting.** The national Targets Review Group has requested that England include 'maintain the current range as well as their focus on priority sites. The Wales submission is not affected by this as range is already included.

### 2. Matters arising

Concern raised over the strategic search areas for wind-farms. A recent local authority report likely to be used as supplementary planning guidance for the north Wales Search Area, has included the issue of bird conservation. However the report has not mentioned red squirrels despite their conservation status.

The concern was mainly due to the probability that the forest may become more fragmented and that the opportunity may not be taken to use the planning process to carry out more surveys and ensure mitigation measures. Land owners, particularly forest planners, need to be aware of their obligations and should work with developers to ensure the protection of the red squirrels and their habitat.

**Action: Forum to prepare a map showing existing and potential areas for red squirrel, including private land.**

**Action: Forum to produce guidance for local authorities, land managers and developers to raise awareness of likely squirrel habitat, the potential impact of development and mitigation required.**

**Action: WSF to raise at the next UK Squirrel Forum meeting.**

### 3. Red Squirrel Recovery Plan.

Liz presented a framework for the plan and the UK Implementation Plan. The group needs to decide what format Wales' report should take, Group agreed that this should take the form of a Red Squirrel Strategy

**Action: Liz to prepare a first draft**

#### **4. Wales Red Squirrel Project.**

Potential funding available for a large scale project to work on the implementation of red squirrel conservation and related public benefit throughout Wales. It was suggested that some comprehensive evaluation of benefit could be done on the Anglesey project to support a bid for money.

**Action:** Prepare a draft paper to scope out a project and lead discussion with potential partners and existing project managers. **Sarah Cartmel**  
**Action: Michelle Bromley** to arrange a meeting with partners and existing project managers and invite Richard Pow from the north west England project to attend (after Easter). **Michelle Bromley**

#### **5. Wales Grey Squirrel Control Policy**

Judith raised the recent launch of the Grey Squirrel policy for England. It had been developed due to the wider woodland review, which highlighted the need for a more coherent policy on the management of grey squirrels in England. The group agreed that it would be useful to produce a similar position for Wales, creating an all Wales agreement on the potential and spatial threats from Grey Squirrels and the possible mechanisms for dealing with them. Suggested that the Forestry Commission could take a lead on this work but would need the support of the Forum and other potential stakeholders. The Forum members present agreed that representatives from the group could act as part of an advisory group reporting to the Woodland Strategy Advisory Panel (WSAP).

**Action: RJ to circulate the England Policy to forum members**  
**Action: A paper will be prepared for the WSAP and Forum members proposed for a Policy Advice group. Michelle Bromley to Lead**

#### **6. Woodland Grants for squirrel management**

Patrick explained how the new woodland grant scheme Better Woodlands for Wales would work. Agreed that there needs to be a more strategic approach to grey squirrel management within the scheme which does currently provide funding for control. It was agreed that more guidance was required on strategic focus and that some red squirrel expertise/background information (eg GIS layer) might be required within the scheme.

**Action: Patrick to produce a guidance note on FCW funding available for squirrel management.**

A general discussion was held on licensing for trapping grey squirrels in red areas and who was responsible for issuing. It was agreed that this would need to be included in any grant scheme guidance on grey control and red conservation.

**Action: Liz to clarify licensing arrangements with Assembly.**

## **7. Partnership Meeting**

Liz presented the Partnership report. Concern was raised at the Partnership meeting regarding the terms and structure for the partnership/forum. The forum agreed that these concerns could be dealt with by revisiting the membership of the Forum and providing more opportunity for the Forum and partnership to meet up and discuss issues of common concern, eg through an annual joint meeting of the Forum and Partnership and circulation of Forum meeting papers.

## **8. WSF Membership**

Agreement that the Forum would contact Julian and Ross Murray from the CLA to get a formal representation. RSPCA membership was also desirable even if only through correspondence and the role of BASC was raised as an important potential member. With inclusion of Sarah Cartmel on the Forum (representing MWRSP and Clocaenog project) all existing squirrel projects are now represented on the Forum. Group agreed that we should also approach EPC to confirm membership.

**Action: Judith to raise with BASC and GCT, Liz to contact Colin Booty from RSPCA and Ruth to write to Ross Murray and speak to EPC.**

## **9. Research/monitoring update**

Brenda updated the group on current research including the proposed enclosure vaccine trials which DEFRA is leading on.

Other work on Landscape ecology at Clocaenog forest, ESI public opinion survey; improvements to survey and monitoring of reds, impact of grey predation on spotted flycatchers; interferon drug success with pox virus and further concerns over the disease spreading to Scotland.

**Action: Brenda to circulate research updates**

## **10. Warfarin Review**

European agreement that Warfarin can continue to be used to control grey squirrels but only in premixed bait from 2007

**Action: RJ to arrange for Warfarin map in Wales to be updated**

## **11. UK Red Squirrel Group Meeting**

Scottish Squirrel conference to be held on the 27<sup>th</sup> Feb. SNH leading, Scottish Executive attending.

## **12. Wales Red Squirrel Project updates**

Cynwyd Hair tube working going on in FE woodland via North Wales Wildlife Trust Species Challenge Fund project

## **13. DONM 5<sup>th</sup> April 2006 Venue to be confirmed.**

