

PIDDLE VALLEY NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

WOODLAND REPORT



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PIDDLE VALLEY NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN – WOODLAND REPORT

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WOODLAND ASSESSMENT TO INFORM THE PIDDLER VALLEY NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN



Plate 2, Holcombe Wood

Introduction

The Piddle Valley, comprising Alton Pancras, Plush, Piddletrenthide, White Lackington and Piddlehinton extends to approximately 4450 hectares (11,000 acres) which includes 26 areas of woodland totalling 149 hectares (368 acres). The woodland, together with a large number of hedgerow trees, tree belts and specimen trees set in broad swathes of arable and grass farmland provide idyllic countryside panoramas. Some of the woodland is easily accessible by public footpaths and bridle ways. The woodland is mainly in the ownership of farmers, most of it undermanaged and much rented out to shooting tenants. See map at Appendix 3 and Schedule of Woodlands at Appendix 4.

Survey Methodology

Site visits to 6 areas of woodland, totalling 39 hectares (96 acres) and representing 26% of the total woodland area, were carried out on 24.4.2014. See Appendix D and Appendices E1 to E6. Opportunities to walk the woods as necessary were taken, as were notes regarding the content and appearance of each woodland. Appendix E1 to E5 contain copies of field notes prepared for each woodland visited and forms the basis for all the recommendations and guidance provided. These tables also give brief answers to item 2 on the Brief. A number of photographs both of the woodlands and some of their features were also obtained, some provide visual support within the report, others are included on an accompanying disc.

Answers to the Brief Points now follow:

Implications of Non and Under-management of Woodlands

If management of the valley woodlands continues at its current level, the following could be the expected outcomes:

- The content of each woodland would gradually mature; this would include natural deaths, collapse of mature trees, possible windblow as shown below, general decline and potential loss of prominence in the landscape over time.



Plate 3, Enterprise Park

- Possible regeneration by means of natural seeding would occur but with large numbers of deer in the countryside much of this would be lost to browsing. It would also be likely to be patchy.
- With this damage of the growing stems would come a loss of any quality timber for whatever end use, other than fuel wood.

Many would comment that “nature will take care of itself” and whilst this is potentially quite true, what we get if we leave her to her own devices, is uncertain. If many of the features we have and value today are to be around well into the future, then management intervention is essential.

Management Planning

One's opinion of a landscape is very much a personal matter and for most people the description would be limited to either like or dislike. Many would find it hard to say what they like about a landscape whilst it would be much easier to say what they dislike. In relation to trees and woodland it is again a personal matter. I for example like to see broadleaved woodlands in a lowland landscape setting but I also can find pleasure in a well designed, well maintained conifer plantation, even at distance. Therefore to comment on landscape enhancement is very difficult. I feel it right to comment on overall features, guidelines and principles rather than specific management directions.



Plate 4, View north from far gate near Church in Plush

That which is mentioned in the previous section is also pertinent here, as are the following :

- In the positioning of new woodlands, design is perhaps the most important. When viewed from a distance, natural, flowing, rounded shapes for woodland boundaries are most pleasing to the eye, often following geographical features, whilst this may not be the most practical from the point of management.
- The positioning of woodlands or tree groups to soften or screen hard development plays a major role in our perception of a landscape.
- Use of species to compliment this shaping is important. Thus in southern England generally broadleaved species would be the norm. If conifers are essential, desired or required then softening the edges of such plantations by the use of broad-leaves or open space would be sensible.
- If area felling is to be employed in an existing woodland, then size and design of the cut edges needs to be sympathetic and sinuous.
- If rotational cutting is to be employed then adjacent areas need to be cut on longer time scales, i.e. allow one cut area to grow for at least 5- 7 years before an adjacent area is removed, thus the landscape scar does not simply increase in size.
- The cutting of track or road lines into existing woodland or the design of such features into new woodlands, for management access, need careful consideration. Particularly where the woods exist or are to be installed on sloping land.
- Finally, as one can see from the photograph earlier in this section, individual and hedgerow trees play a major factor in our potential perception of, and our likes or dislikes of a landscape.

As one gets further into design and management techniques then other aspects come into play, but the above covers most of the principles.

Woodland Management and the Future

I have chosen to address these questions together as many of the points covered cross the boundaries of both.

The selection of tree species, quantities and management methods depends primarily on the needs and expectations of the woodlands and their owners. If one is aiming to produce high quality timber for ultimate use for say furniture manufacture then different species and management styles would be needed from those required if building materials were being produced. If landscape consideration is the only priority then another direction would be taken. Most woodlands were planted originally to provide for the needs of the local populace.

Whether this was for building material, fuel wood, fencing or to allow stock to graze under protection in winter.

Tree Species

Highly productive and faster growing species which generally appear acceptable in landscape terms include Ash, Sycamore, Alders, Wild Cherry, Sweet Chestnut and the Birches. Slower growing and normally more accepted as typical woodland species include the Oaks, Beech, Lime, Hornbeam and Norway Maple. There is also a range of species more suited to wet ground which appear in our countryside but that are often less acceptable in landscape terms. These include the poplar and willow species.

Coppice Species

Historically our principle coppice species come from both the faster and slower growing range depending on end use. Typically, Hazel, Ash, Sweet Chestnut, Sycamore, Alder, Willow, Birch and Oak, can be found scattered across the county however Hazel is probably the most commonly accepted.

This type of woodland can be highly productive and is managed on a rotational basis ranging from 1 to 2 years in the case of willow for basket or hurdle making, through 7 to 10 years for Hazel when producing thatching materials, hurdles, pea and bean sticks, etc. Sweet Chestnut is managed over 12 to 20 year rotations for fencing materials as is Birch for brush heads and turnary poles (poles which can be placed on a lathe, either in full length or cut to shorter lengths and “turned” into other items). Some rotations extend into the 40 to 70 year range when one is looking at larger diameter construction poles or material that can be sawn. Thus markets tend to dictate what species and what rotation is applied to any given crop. These time schedules can change depending on market requirements and the whims of owners. There is obviously much scope for expansion using selected species such as Ash, Sycamore, Sweet Chestnut and Birch when one looks at the booming firewood market.

Individual Trees, Groups, Belts and Hedgerow Trees



Plate 5, View south from road outside Church down into Plush

These categories of tree cover play an important part in our countryside as do the woods and copses as can be seen in both Plate 4 and 5, where one shows the field boundary pattern and the other a typical roadside belt. These features are highly visible and contain large quantities of utilisable material which is often ignored by landowners. It is also essential to consider these aspects when putting together a plan for the management of trees on a property.

The subject of hedgerow trees could command its own book, but the simple principles are as follows.

- These trees are highly valued in visual terms if for no other reason.
- The individual specimens can be recruited from existing stems within a hedge, marked appropriately to ensure they are not cut or damaged by the flail, or they can be planted as individuals. The latter operation gives the opportunity to diversify the species content and thus the overall impression.
- In order to shape or encourage the trees in a particular manner, a programme of pruning or manipulation will be necessary.

Climate Change, Disease and Species Selection

There are as many theories about climate change and its effect on trees as there are tree species themselves. I provide here my opinion as to where things may go. This is informed by my reading of published papers, listening to eminent speakers over the years and monitoring the Forestry Commission's specialists at work. There are also a number of things that are fairly certain and that experts agree on as regards this matter.

- Climate Change is a fact of life, it is happening, but currently we have a range of potential outcomes which are not necessarily helpful.
- Trees, as with other vegetation types will almost certainly suffer whether its through warmer, colder, wetter or drier weather episodes.
- Species Diversification is probably the best defence against this uncertain outcome. Committing to single species plantations as happened through the 20th century is unlikely to provide us with an appropriate answer.
- Planting of species from other parts of the world, maybe something to consider. However this may bring with it its own problems, with things like insect and pest attacks.
- The use of provenances of seed from other areas of the world, i.e. Beech seed from southern France may be something to be considered.
- Doing nothing is not an option. Consider that a semi mature Ash is about 80 to 100 years old, a mature Oak is anything up to 400 year old, scientists state quite categorically that we will see marked temperature changes within the next 20 to 50 years. We need to be taking at least some action in the very near future.
- Outbreaks of previously unheard of Tree Diseases are becoming increasingly common as can be witnessed by the recent problems with Larch, Oak and Ash. Where these concerns will take us is difficult to guess but again elements of Climate Change actions may give some direction.

Longevity of our Ancient and Semi Natural Woodlands (ASNW's)

Whilst no one would wish to see our ancient woodlands disappear, the previously mentioned problems that our country's woodlands and trees face, are very real. In 50 years time we may still have beautiful woods such as those seen above, but we may not be able to be quite as purist in our thinking and practical management, as we have been in the past. The use of non-native species within such woodlands and the movement from single species domination, (as shown above) to a wider range of species are two of the considered steps.

There are no easy answers to fix the problems mentioned in this section however clear and careful monitoring of the health of our trees and woodlands and active management of them will play a major role.



Plate 6, Watcombe Wood

New Woodlands

There is, as has already been mentioned, quite a scope for the planting and establishment of new woodlands. But decisions must be taken as to why these woods are necessary/wanted, what their future uses might supply and most importantly what their owners will get out of them. There is an old adage which holds as true today as it did in past centuries.

“The wood that Pays, stays”.

Thus careful thought must go into their planning.

What land could be used? There is a reasonably high level of low value agricultural land available on many farms. Land that is too steep to plough, land that is sour and rarely produces a good crop. Land that is too tight to manage with modern large machinery, field corners and many other small parcels which could be planted with trees. It must however be emphasised again that the reason for planting must be clear and thought through, otherwise we would simply be adding more unmanaged woods to those which already exist.

Flooding and Flood Protection

During the last winter (2013/14) the subject of flooding hit the news throughout many parts of the UK. Whilst there are a myriad of reasons why this happened and what can be done to remove or restrict the threat in the future, ongoing work being carried out by both Government Agencies and private business indicates that the use of targeted tree planting may go some way to helping with soil stability and run-off from agricultural land. This is by no means the be-all-and-end-all of the problem.

Many country roads have been partially blocked or at least become more difficult to pass along because of soil washed from arable fields adjacent to them. And yes there are more ways than one to stop this happening but the planting of appropriately constructed roadside belts may be one answer.

Much of this soil wash finds its way into streams and brooks which flow through the countryside creating problems of blockage, silting up and damaging water supplies.

Targeted planting of mixed layered woodlands could help filter much of this wash. Research and work being carried out by the Forestry Commission under co-operation with the Environment Agency is pointing to trees being one of the methods landowners may wish to consider.

Grant Aid for Woodland Work

Historically there have been government grants available to land owners to aid the management of existing and the establishment of new woodlands. Whilst some of these grants still exist, their number and value have varied in recent times due to the economic climate and the upcoming Rural Development Plan round due in 2014/15. Appendix F of this report contains the most recent summary of advice from the Forestry Commission relating to Grants for which they are responsible for dispensing.

In summary the majority of grant types are currently closed to new applications, however the grant available to help fund Management Plan production is open. Grants from the Forestry Commission are available to land owners by contract agreements and are not normally available on a group or co-operative basis, unless the group or co-operative actually own the land in question. Grants may be applied for by an agent or contractor applying on behalf of an owner, or by the owner themselves. There is generally no specification as to who must carry out woodland work, in order to receive grant aid, only that the work to be grant aided must be completed to an agreed standard and within an agreed claim year before the money will be paid. This allows volunteer groups, supervised school groups, etc., to become involved, thus in many cases keeping the costs to an acceptable level.

More information on grants and their current availability can be obtained from Deborah Elton at Forestry Commission's regional office at Buller's Hill, Kennford, Exeter, EX6 7XR, or by telephone on 01392 834262.

Employment Opportunities

As with any craft or work field, there are always opportunities for employment and woodland work is no different. The realistic picture however is one of an employment type where you are required to work outside in all weathers and the levels of remuneration are not at the highest rates, being comparable to agricultural workers wages.

Normally local woodland working runs in families and many of the businesses are small, 1 and 2 man operations, as noted by the coppice worker seen during our site visits. The level of investment in tools and machinery are fairly low i.e. a chainsaw, a variety of hand tools, a pick-up truck or off-road vehicle and perhaps a small agricultural style tractor and trailer. Staff are usually highly skilled, having received their training "on the job" rather than through an educational establishment. Our local agricultural college at Kingston Maurward runs a variety of courses with land management at their core, many of which provide good practical experience in woodland management techniques, such as coppicing and chainsaw operation.

In relation to employment within the target area, much would rely on the building and servicing of markets for relatively low value products, such as firewood, thatching materials,

woven panels and other coppice products. Coping with the working of larger, more valuable timber is less likely for someone starting afresh, due to the well established companies already working the material and the high cost of machinery needed to make the work safer and more economic.

Wood as a Fuel

In order to guide properly on matters relating to wood fuel it would be advisable to look at the Forestry Commission England's web site, at www.forestry.gov.uk/england and follow the links through Policy, Practice and Guidance, to Wood fuel. This will provide a broad picture of Government's policy and attitude to wood fuel, the grant structure which has been available, the wood fuel supply chain and different boiler/stove units which maybe available. This web site will also supply detail and guidance on matters relating to Climate Change.

In general terms the supply of material locally is likely to be in the form of either basic firewood (logs) or for the larger boiler installations, wood chip. Wood Pellets are available on the commercial market, most of which are produced in countries other than the UK, for example China and imported into Britain for domestic use. The average volume per hectare of thinnings from a typical broadleaved woodland is 20 cubic meters or tonnes every 7 years. The data for the Piddle Valley denotes in the region of 149 hectares (368 acres) of woodland, thus there is a current reserve of approximately 425 tonnes per year of material which could be harvested for fuel wood purposes. This is a supply which, if appropriate management is employed, could be a self-perpetuating supply.

Whilst one would expect to recognise other products from those woodlands as well as the fuel wood, it is still not beyond credibility that volumes such as this could be available. This calculation does not take into account wooded belts, small copses or hedgerow and garden trees, none of which have been identified in your basic data.

Wood Fuel Production

If one were starting from scratch, i.e. new planting, to produce fuel wood and taking the type of market likely to be supplied as domestic use, the ideal material to turn into fuel wood would be species such as Ash, Sycamore, Norway Maple and Sweet Chestnut. All grown on a rotation of between 15 and 25 years in the form of coppice. This would maximise the material produced per hectare, make management easier and more efficient and provide the best working conditions for the producer.

Currently, from what was noted during our field visits, there are already several thousand tonnes of material of an appropriate size, but not necessarily in coppice form, growing in the under managed woodlands identified in your documentation. Thus a supply of material is already available and provides a stop-gap to allow time to create new woods, if this is considered desirable. Whether new woods were created or not, there would still appear to be decades of low value material available to fill a market such as this.



Plate 7, Redlands Coppice

Markets

The economic management of woodlands whether through the production of items such as wood fuel, bean and pea sticks, or the myriad of other products which could be produced, is totally reliant on marketing, particularly at a local level. Understanding the size and needs of your local markets is essential and the collection of the basic data to encourage production for this market, is probably the first step to be taken. As already identified there is in excess of 400 tonnes a year available for harvesting but if this is too much for local use, then there will only be limited management of woodlands within the target area.

Within the target area it is unlikely, but not impossible, to use wood as the fuel source for anything other than a household fuel. This may be done through direct heating such as wood-burning stoves or indirectly by means of a boiler heating water which is then circulated to any number of buildings or outlets. It is though still primarily at the single property level. How many properties would buy from your individual merchant or from co-operative production?

Processing and Storage of Wood Fuel

Currently most wood fuel is produced “on site”, i.e. within the woodlands where the raw material is growing. This is usually done by cutting the material into lengths during the first winter, stacking it in the woodland through the spring and summer and then converting it into cut logs during the next winter or spring.

This air drying usually brings the moisture content down between 20 and 30% which is acceptable for household use. The stacks within the woodland usually have a cover on the top but the sides are left open to allow air movement. This gives a product known as “seasoned logs”. This method relies on the producer delivering a load of material to the individual household and does not really provide the scope for the “community “involvement you may be looking for.

An idea which maybe explored is the creation of a “fuel wood depot”. Wood cut to convenient length, say 1 to 2 metres, is hauled to a central building ideally an open sided barn. It is stacked and stored here for up to a year, at which point it is converted into individual logs and it is the responsibility of the end user to come and collect their required stock. It may still be necessary to deliver to some customers, particularly the elderly, because the physical ability to do the work may not be there. Sighting of such a premises would ideally be central to the working and marketing area.

On this basis it would be possible to run a co-operative business owned and run by the locals and perhaps employing one or two people to actually carry out the woodland contract work.

Labour and Machinery Requirements

The machinery required for any enterprise like this whether privately owned or run as a co-operative would be as follows:

- Usually 2 persons. 2 being the necessary number to operate machinery safely under most Health and Safety Regulations.
- Transport for men and kit, perhaps a van.
- Transport for the wood, either in its raw state or converted to logs for delivery. This would in it's simplest form be a basic tractor and trailer or pick up truck.
- Chainsaws, 2 at minimum.
- If a depot is to be used, then a barn of some description and a yard within which the storage and conversion is managed and carried out.
- If this line is to be followed it may be sensible to use some sort of saw-bench to convert the timber lengths and a log splitting device or machine may also be required.

Woodland Management - Financial Aspects

As mentioned under Wood as a Fuel, there would appear to be approximately 425 tonnes of material which could be harvested into the firewood market, in one form or another, per year. Firewood could be valued somewhere between £80 and £150 per tonne to the end user. There are three reasons for the wide range in price per tonne. Firstly, hardwoods such as Oak and Beech command a much higher price than softwoods such as Sycamore and Larch. Secondly, newly felled and seasoned timber commands a higher price than fallen timber. Thirdly, there are inevitably fluctuations in timber prices from year to year. This provides a potential annual income of between £34,000 and £64,000 before costs. I would suggest that costs, including initial purchase of the raw material, operational costs, i.e. machinery purchase, running costs, repairs, etc., and delivery, would probably account for approximately half that sum. Thus there is the potential to make an acceptable living from this market.

If one could bring back into rotation most of the coppice which is currently not in regular management, I would suggest this will increase the potential income by another 15%. The market for coppice products such as thatching materials has been and continues to be, reasonably buoyant.

Suggested Management System

I have been asked to comment on how a co-operative management system might operate. In order for such a system to be put in place and to stand a chance of succeeding, it is in my opinion essential to have a willingness of local landowners, local people who provide the main market outlet, a management committee or organisation and a small contractor base, to work together in close harmony.

The land owning element has to agree to place their material almost without exception into this market place to ensure the long term supply of the raw material. This can be achieved as long as an acceptable price is agreed and revisited on a regular basis.

The market place is slightly more flexible as it would be possible to sell outside the immediate area but it would mean an increase in transport costs. This is something that the managers would need to consider as it of course cuts into profits.

It will almost certainly be a sensible option to employ an experienced and qualified woodland manager or advisor, particularly in the early stages, to help set up contracts, guide on practical management issues and help guide the whole set up of the co-operative. As time progresses and experience is gained this expense may be able to be reduced or even dispensed with.

I would be able to supply a list of what I consider to be reputable consultants and managers if this is required.

Summary

The woodlands within the area covered by this report host a variety of interest, ranging from wildlife and ecological diversity, through sporting potential, to a resource for a carbon neutral fuel production. There are opportunities for quiet relaxation and for relatively high production of utilisable timber products. There is one major benefit which sits right at the top of the list, that of the landscape impact created by the mere existence of the woodlands.

As has been stated in the report, a continued lack of management of these woodlands will ultimately see them deteriorate and in some cases perhaps disappear from the landscape. This will be both unfortunate and detrimental for not only the wildlife currently reliant on them but also for the resident community, as well as those who are enticed into the locality, as tourists.

Well managed woodlands can enhance the value of any property whether farm, large country estate or a small cottage in a copse of trees.

Incomes are there to be won and lost and often just depending on whether the woodland resource in the area is being managed.

Photographs

All photographs included in this report were taken on the day of inspection.

Cover	Plate 1	Stickley Coppice
Page 4	Plate 2	Holcombe Wood
Page 5	Plate 3	Enterprise Park
Page 6	Plate 4	View north from far gate near Church in Plush
Page 7	Plate 5	View south from road outside Church down to Plush
Page 9	Plate 6	Watcombe Wood
Page 12	Plate 7	Redlands Coppice

Further photographs were taken on the day and are available on disc.

Report Author

My name is Richard Preston and I have been asked by the people involved in the production of the Piddle Valley Neighbourhood Plan, to produce this report on the current state and future potential of the woodlands within the Piddle Valley.

My history in woodland management started some 43 years ago when I started working in a woodland close to my home in the West Midlands as a forest worker.

Following college training and the award of a Diploma in Forestry from the Cumbria College of Agriculture and Forestry, which is now part of Lancaster University, I joined the Forestry Commission in 1976.

I worked for the Forestry Commission in several management roles ranging from production forestry in the North of Scotland, to lowland forestry and public recreation in Kent. I spent my last 22 years before retirement, as the Woodland Officer for Dorset, being responsible for providing guidance to land owners on the management of their woodlands and for managing the Government's various Grant Schemes and Licensing requirements within the County. I retired in March 2013.

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APPENDIX A

REPORT BRIEF

PIDDLE VALLEY NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN – WOODLAND

Context

With approximately 149 hectares (368 acres) of woodland in a total of some 4,450 hectares (1100) acres within the boundary of the Piddle Valley group of parishes (comprising Alton Pancras, Plush, Piddletrenthide, White Lackington and Piddlehinton), the Environment, Landscape and Farming Focus Group and the Community Energy Generation and Low Energy Design Focus Group have identified a need for more detailed knowledge and advice on woodland and its potential. Some woodland within the Valley is easily accessible with public footpaths and bridleways, some is used by local shoots and some privately managed. Ownership lies with a number of landowners and farm holdings.

The Piddle Valley Neighbourhood Plan policy document will be finalised second half of 2014 for formal submission and inspection.

Brief – Environment aspects

1. To Inspect 6 of the 26 areas of significant woodland which total 39 hectares (96 acres) within the boundary of the Piddle Valley Group of Parishes.

The attached map marks the areas of woodland

- Holcombe Wood
- Watcombe Wood
- Firland Wood
- Flighting Pond
- Redlands Coppice
- Enterprise Park Wood

2. To advise present condition and level of management within each area.

3. To advise the consequences and impact of no significant change in the management of woodland in the Piddle Valley.

4. To advise the potential benefits of a recommended management plan and the overall benefit of woodland management in terms of landscape enhancement.

5. Identify preferred tree species to develop more productive woodland and benefit to the landscape; assessment of coppiced woodland and scope for expansion. It would also be helpful to address the question of planting individual specimen trees within hedgerows.

6. Advise the implications of climate change in terms of species selection, management and potential production and to advise on the longevity and prognosis for ancient woodland with suggestions for restocking or replacing.

7. The scope for additional woodland planting

- on poor areas (Grade 4) land which has a very low agricultural potential
- on areas within or close to flood plain to alleviate / reduce potential flood risk

8. To advise on grants available for the management of woodland
on an individual wood basis
on a group / co-operative basis

9. To advise potential for employment on individual and co-operative basis.

Brief – Woodland fuel aspects

While recognising the importance, level and intensity of game shooting and the protection of natural flora and fauna, it should be possible for the woodland to also support the use of the bi-products. The aim is to enable the community to have access to woodland bi-products through a Community Land Trust or similar initiative as part of the overall management strategy.

10. To advise potential and viability of bi-products and production ie suitability for coppicing, chipping, pellet production, logs or charcoal.

11. To advise style of woodland enterprise for achieving wood fuel and preferred management practices.

12. To advise the potential market for wood both as a bi-product and longer term potential with emphasis on community use within the Piddle Valley.

13. To advise on the practicality of mobile units, the location, storage facilities and machinery requirements, conditioning and transport of cut timber.

14. To advise on the structure of the market for wood as a household fuel and power generation and anticipated viable yield.

15. The potential for employment on individual and co-operative basis and benefit to the overall woodland management.

Report

Full report and recommendations will be required as a supporting document / evidence for the Inspector who will be examining our Neighbourhood Plan later in 2014.

Inspection

Members of the NP Working Group (including Environment and Energy Focus Groups) would act as guides and be present for the inspection.

© *Piddle Valley Neighbourhood Plan Woodland Brief prepared originally December 2013*

APPENDIX B

TERMINOLOGY

TERM	DESCRIPTION
ASN /ASNW	Ancient and Semi Natural Woodland. – broadleaved woodland today composed of the same native tree and shrub species which would have been on that site since before 1600AD.
AWS	Ancient Woodland Site. – a woodland site today which bears many ancient woodland characteristics but which has been modified by planting non native tree species.
OSN	Other Semi Natural Woodland. – one that bears some of the characteristics of Ancient woodland but is obviously of more recent origin.
P	Plantation. – a woodland of non native species planted more recently.
Thinning	Removal by selective cutting of between 20 and 40% of the stems or volume of a woodland.
Clear Felling	Total removal by cutting of all tree cover on a site, leaving the area free for replanting or another use.
Selective Felling	Removal of between 40 and 85% of the tree cover allowing for replanting.
Coppicing	Cutting of stems from a multi stemmed stump and allowing the stump or stool to regrow.
Stool	Stump or root stock from which coppice shoot will grow.
In rotation coppice	An area of coppice growth which has and is still being cut on a rotational basis, i.e. 7 – 10 years.
Over-stood	Stem of coppice, of whatever species, which have not been cut on the normally accepted rotation for that species. For example hazel stems which may be as old a 30 or 40 years.

Coppice cycle	As above.
Natural regeneration	Young trees / seedlings that occur within a woodland by natural processes not by planting.
Under-storey	Shrub species and or young regeneration of tree species which exists under the main canopy of trees.
Field Layer	The ground layer vegetation. In a field this may be grass, in a woodland it may be wild garlic, ferns, blue bells or a mix of a range of species including forms of grass.
Deer Browse	The removal of shoots, leaves or growing tips by deer. Common on unprotected hazel coppice.
Standard trees / Standards	Usually found on their own in fields or in coppice where they provide another canopy level.

APPENDIX C

MAP OF WOODLANDS AND AREAS SURVEYED

APPENDIX D

SCHEDULE OF WOODLANDS AREAS

(Details taken from Ordnance Survey Map 1901 -
Dorset Records Office does not hold any more recent maps)

Woodland inspected on 24 April 2014:

	OS	Hectares	Acres
Holcombe Wood	120/121	11.61	28.688
Watcombe Wood	26	13.08	32.330
Firland Wood	144	4.78	11.812
Flighting Pond	122/123	0.71	1.748
Redlands Coppice	286	6.67	16.482
Enterprise Park Wood	?	2.0 approx	5.0 approx
		<u>38.85</u>	<u>96.00</u>

Other Woodland in the Piddle Valley:

Lovelace Copse	49	2.4 approx	6.0 approx
*Horse Close	?	12.0 approx	30.0 approx
Aldermore Wood	127	2.68	6.26
Invest Wood	19	5.21	12.885
Hill Wood	24	12.79	31.605
Ball Bottom Wood	215	0.45	1.106
*Penny Farthing Wood	?	2.4 approx	6.0 approx
Fetcham Wood	?	2.0 approx	5.0 approx
Sheeplands Wood	90	1.72	4.241
Rockpits Wood	186	2.67	6.590
Middle Hill Plantation	334	1.30	3.220
Stickley Coppice	130	3.38	8.348
New Coppice Plantation	337	6.34	15.661
Gore Hill Plantation	332/333	2.74	6.772
Token Hills Coppice	298	4.36	10.770
Kingsrove Wood	473	19.12	47.408
Incombe Wood	478	12.34	30.486
*Hog Leaze Copse	?	2.0 approx	5.0 approx
Doles Hill Plantation	7438	11.48	28.370
*Little Puddle Bottom	?	2.8 approx	7.0 approx
		<u>110.18</u>	<u>272.25</u>

Grand Total **149.03** **368.25**

*These areas are not shown as woodland on the 1901 Ordnance Survey Map but are shown as woodland on the AONB map as supplied by Tom Munro, AONB Team Manager. (AONB map does not show the area of each piece of woodland).

APPENDIX E

ASSESSMENT AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR WOODLANDS SURVEYED

E1 Wood Name: Holcombe Wood OS 120/121 – 11.61 hectares (28.688 acres)				
Woodland Type. ASN, AWS, P, OSN	Content Species, ages, canopies	Managed Y/N	Current State	Needs
Principally ASN with a small area of AWS	Much of the southern and western parts of the woodland dominated by Ash over scattered and poor quality hazel. The northern area contains principally Oak with again an under-storey of poor hazel. In the lower lying eastern edge is an area planted to Sitka Spruce about 65 years ago and now containing a scatter of these non natives with self sown Ash between. In the north east corner an area of more recent restocking with Ash, Oak and Wild Cherry with an under-storey of better quality hazel.	Semi-managed	Windblown trees are removed for fuel wood, some thinning has been carried out in the western and southern areas. Low level management. Little evidence of young trees other than one isolated area, this lack due mainly to deer pressure and no protection of the newly introduced stems.	The introduction of a managed thinning policy across the woodland to restore a balanced approach. Planting of mixed broadleaved species in character with this woodland and protection of natural regenerating species including hazel coppice from deer browse. Introduction of a deer management policy with appropriate targeting of deer species and sexes.

E2 Wood Name: Watcombe Wood OS 26 – 13.08 hectares (32.330 acres)				
Woodland Type. ASN, AWS, P, OSN	Content Species, ages, canopies	Managed Y/N	Current State	Needs
ASN, minor AWS	Principally Oak / Ash woodland with some coppice under-storey. Some old Beech occur.	Minimal principally for the shoot.	Wind snap and windblow evident from the storms of earlier this year. Minimal management apparent and primarily directed at the pheasant shoot. There is a reasonable ride access network which could be improved.	A program of thinning could be implemented to start the process of manipulating the tree canopy. Whilst there was not too much evidence of deer damage, the lack of tree regeneration and some browsing of coppice regrowth indicates a fairly high population. Instigate a deer management policy, reinstate the coppicing regimes and when thinning has taken place assess the ability to plant young trees for the future.

E3 Wood Name: Firland Wood OS 144 – 4.78 hectares (11.812 acres)				
Woodland Type. ASN, AWS, P, OSN	Content Species, ages, canopies	Managed Y/N	Current State	Needs
AWS	Contains a mix of principally Beech, Ash and Sycamore, with a scatter of the spruce and Larch planted probably	Not in the recent past	Large quantities of over-stood Ash and Sycamore coppice, some windblown stems. Prolific very young natural regeneration which will almost certainly be gone by the end of this season.	As with wood 2 and 3.

E4 Wood Name: Flying Pond Wood OS 122/123 – 0.71 hectares (1.748 acres)				
Woodland Type. ASN, AWS, P, OSN	Content Species, ages, canopies	Managed Y/N	Current State	Needs
Plantation	The majority of this small roadside wood is taken up by a large pond used for rearing and flying ducks. The woodland itself contains a small number of large mature Poplar and a larger number of young Poplar, Willow and Alder.	No	The younger stems all appear at their original planting positions, ditches are maintained to a degree but no apparent tree work has been carried out for a number of years.	The introduction of a managed thinning policy across the woodland to restore a balanced approach. Planting of mixed broadleaved species on the drier parts would help soften edges. It would be worth considering the establishment of a mixed broadleaved copse adjacent to this wood and between it a further copse only a hundred meters or so away.

E5 Wood Name: Redlands Coppice OS 286 – 6.670 hectares (16.482 acres)				
Woodland Type. ASN, AWS, P, OSN	Content Species, ages, canopies	Managed Y/N	Current State	Needs
A mix of ASN, AWS and P	The woodland can be split into 3 fairly distinct areas and types. 1. The Roadside Belt : AWS / P comprising a long narrow belt of principally mature Beech with a remnant roadside hedge. The understorey here comprises some natural regeneration of the Beech, some Ash and some coppiced Hazel. It is very much dominated by the “Beech Belt”	The coppice area is managed well and on rotation but the rest has had little attention.	See Content for the descriptions.	1. Roadside. Thin some of the mature Beech allowing light and air to the regeneration underneath. This will encourage to long term survival of the belt as an important feature.

	<p>2. Worked Hazel Coppice: It would appear this is principally P. On the south east facing slope at its northern end is a large area of “in rotation” hazel coppice. Cut apparently on about a 10 yr cycle the coppice is well stocked, well managed and shows little sign of deer damage. Some standard trees have been retained over the years but these are sparse.</p> <p>3. Valley bottom : This area contains large mature / over-mature specimens of Beech, Ash and Sycamore. Due to the dark canopy little exists below these mature stems. A little scattered weak hazel coppice.</p>			<p>2. Coppice. Continue the current management, monitoring for deer damage.</p> <p>3. Remove a couple of the mature stems releasing light to the ground and plant new trees for the future.</p>
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E6 Wood Name: Enterprise Park Wood – 2 hectares (approx.) (5 acres approx.)				
Woodland Type. ASN, AWS, P, OSN	Content Species, ages, canopies	Managed Y/N	Current State	Needs
P with minor elements of OSN, probably the old hedgerows	Mixed woodland Primarily Beech and Ash. Elements of original conifer content, SP, Larch also some Sycamore, Elm suckers. Upper canopy with young seedling under-storey.	N	Under-thinned, no real management access. Ash natural regeneration prolific in gaps where other trees failed. Stocking levels of both canopies dense. Stem quality poor.	Thinning then manage the natural regeneration. Create management access to ease operations.

Operations Note 029

Updated: 20 March 2014

EWGS and RDPE Transition

1 Purpose

This operations note explains how Forestry Commission England intends to handle English Woodland Grant Scheme (EWGS) business during the transition from the current programme (2007-2013) to the new programme (2014-2020).

2 Context

Defra Ministers have confirmed what they intend to offer during the 2014 transition year, prior to the start of the next Rural Development Programme (RDP). Ministers want to offer a package of Rural Development Programme support in the transition between programmes in 2014 that reflects the likely need to target funding more in the new programme and that avoids building up excessive commitments now.

Ministers have also committed to fund 2000ha of woodland creation in 2014/15.

The following arrangements take into account the rules of the new Rural Development Programme (RDP) from 1 January 2016.

The following arrangements also take into account and are constantly subject to budget availability.

3 Key Points

- Significantly high levels of demand for EWGS;
- Resulting in limited budget availability and requirement to maintain funds for priority grant types (Plant Health WRG, Plant Health WIG, WPG, WAG and WCG);
- Greater clarity of new RDP rules;
- Details below are subject to ongoing budget review and further restrictions.

4 Grant Types

Woodland Management Grant (WMG)

Now closed to new business. Cases currently being processed must be approved by 15 May 2014.

ON029 – EWGS and RDPE transition

Woodland Improvement Grants (WIG's)

New Applications:

Public Access WIG's: now closed for new applications.

Woodfuel WIG: Currently open for 14/15 and 15/16 claim years

Other WIG's:

- 14/15 claim year only available for Plant Health issues;
- 15/16 claim year open but with in-year claim deadlines – new programme ineligible activities to be claimed by 30 September 2015; new programme eligible items to be claimed by 31 March 2016 (see Appendix 1 and 2 for details and lists of eligible and ineligible items);
- 16/17 claim year and beyond not available for new business;

Work in Progress (Applications received and in GLOS by 10 March, 2014)

- These applications will continue to be processed but non plant health applications for 14/15 will have to move to 15/16 and will have to meet the claim deadlines for ineligible items.
- 16/17 and 17/18 can proceed but only for eligible items (public access not classed as an eligible item)

Amendments

- Requests for items to be amended within agreements will result in those requests, relative to those items, being treated as new applications

FC approved Management Plans will be required to support first claims from the 1 April 2015 and any claim from the 1 January 2016.

Woodland Regeneration Grant (WRG)

New Applications:

- 14/15 claim year only available for restocking in response to Plant Health issues;
- 15/16 claim year only available for restocking in response to Plant Health issues;
- 16/17 claim year and beyond not available for new business.

Work in Progress (Applications received and in Glos by 10 March, 2014):

- Applications will continue to be processed but 14/15 non plant health applications will have to move to 15/16 as the ONLY available claim year.

Amendments:

- Requests for items to be amended within agreements will result in those requests, relative to those items, being treated as new applications

FC approved Management Plans will be required to support first claims from the 1 April 2015 and any claim from the 1 January 2016.

Woodland Creation Grant (WCG) and Farm Woodland Payments (FWP)

WCG

- Currently closed for new applications;
- We will take stock in April of the need to offer a further window for applications to ensure we achieve the desired target of 2,000ha of planting in 2014/15. Experience tells us that around 35% of approved schemes either do not take place or are deferred to a later year (e.g. due to bad weather during the planting season). Therefore, we will be unable to establish a final picture for 2014/15 until April. **It is important that applicants notify us promptly if they intend to abandon, or wish to amend the claim year of, approved schemes.** This will allow us to make maximum use of the funds available;
- We will open an application window for new woodland creation applications for the 2015/16 season in early 2015, when the new programme has been approved.

FWP

Applicants are reminded that in order to receive farm woodland payments that we need to receive your claim for 1st instalment of woodland creation grant by 30 September 2015.

Woodland Planning Grant (WPG)

- Currently open for 14/15 and 15/16 claim years.

Management Plan Requirement

- All funding for existing woodlands under the next Rural Development Programme will be dependent on having in place a Forestry Commission approved management plan;
- FC approved management plans will be required to support first claims for WRG and WIG after the 1 April 2015;

- FC approved management plans will be required to support any claims for WRG and WIG from the 1 January 2016.

2013-14 current year claims

- It is important that current year claims are received by 31 March 2014;
- Request to reschedule from 13/14 can only be accommodated in 14/15 if they are for WCG, WPG or plant health related;
- Those claims not received on time may not be allowed.

Amendments

- Any requests to amend currently approved contracts to a different claim year will result in the amendment being considered under the new application rules outlined above;
- It is imperative that if you are considering amending your claim year then you contact us as soon as possible so we can outline the implications and whether or not it will be acceptable.

5 Transition Table

Grant type	Current contracts	New applications / approvals	Claims from 01/01/2014	2014 applications*	Comments
EWGS -WAG	Continue to term	Continue until September 2014	Claims will be processed using existing timescales and procedures	Yes	
EWGS -WPG	Continue to term	Continue until September 2014	Claims will be processed using existing timescales and procedures	Yes	New management plan templates now available
EWGS -WMG	Continue to term	Closed for new applications	Contracts approved by 15/05/2014 continue to term	No	Closed

ON029 – EWGS and RDPE transition

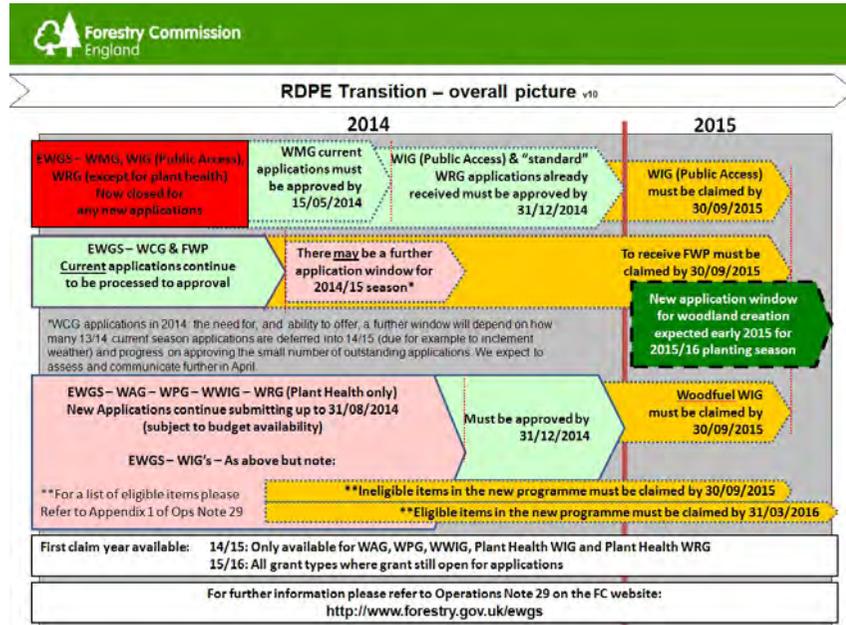
Grant type	Current contracts	New applications / approvals	Claims from 01/01/2014	2014 applications*	Comments
EWGS –WIG	Continue to term	Continue until September 2014	Claims will be processed using existing timescales and procedures	Yes	14/15 claim year now reserved for plant health WIG's only. Open for 15/16 No offer for 16/17 and beyond Claims beyond 30 September 2015 will need to be eligible items (Appendix1) Applications with claims in 15/16 will require a management plan.
EWGS -WIG Wood-fuel	Claims required by 30/09/2015	Continue until September 2014	Continue until 30/09/2015	Yes	Currently open for 14/15 and 15/16 claim years Claims required by end of September 2015
EWGS -WRG	Continue to term	Continue until September 2014	Claims will be processed using existing timescales and procedures	Yes	Plant health related agreements only for 14/15 and 15/16 No offer for 16/17 and beyond Claims from 15/16 onwards will require a management plan
EWGS -WCG	Continue to term	Continue to approve those schemes already in GLOS. See comments column re new application windows.	1 st WCG claims required before 30/09/2015 to be eligible for FWP Second and subsequent claims okay	Currently Closed	Applications now closed. Possible new application window in 2014 - see key points above. There will be an application window early 2015 for 15/16 claim year.

ON029 – EWGS and RDPE transition

Grant type	Current contracts	New applications / approvals	Claims from 01/01/2014	2014 applications*	Comments
FWP	Continue to term	FWP will be unavailable if first claim for WCG is not received by 30/09/2015	1 st WCG claims required before 30/09/2015 to be eligible for FWP Second and subsequent claims okay	N/A	FWP will be unavailable if first claim for WCG is not received by 30/09/2015
FWS/ FWPS legacy	Continue to term	N/A	Claims will be processed using existing timescales and procedures	No	Successions handled as normal
WGS	Continue to term	N/A	Claims will be processed using existing timescales and procedures	No	Scheme unaffected by RDPE transition
Dedication	Continue to term	N/A	Claims will be processed using existing timescales and procedures	No	Scheme unaffected by RDPE transition

***2014 applications subject to normal budget management**

The chart below provides a timeline for RDPE transition and is correct as of February 2014.



6 Sources of further advice

The [Grants and Regulations website](#) contains all the information you need to apply for grant support. Alternatively, you can request this information from your local [Forestry Commission office](#).

You can subscribe to email notifications of significant grant, regulatory and tree health updates by contacting us at: gnationalteam@forestry.gsi.gov.uk.

7 Versions

- Version 1 issued 14 November 2012
- Version 2 issued 9 August 2013
- Version 3 issued 14 December 2013
- Version 4 issued 10 January 2014
- Version 5 issued 10 March 2014
- Version 6 issued 20 March 2014

Appendix 1 – 15/16 Eligible WIG Standard Costs

The list below shows those standard costs currently available within EWGS that will remain as eligible items under the new programme. Such items can be claimed up until 31 March 2016

Biodiversity

B1 Small Pond Creation

B2 Bird Box

Mammal Management

C6 Deer High Seat

Tree Establishment

E1, E2 Supply of plants

E4-E7 Supply and plant tree and shelter

G5, G6 Drainage

C8 Vole Guards

Fencing

F1-F15 All fencing options except F16 (removal)

Vegetation Management

V1-V4 Scrub management

V7 Asulox application

V8 Stump treatment

V9-V10a Coppicing

V15-V18a Rhododendron removal

V20 Woodland hedge management

V21 Tree pollarding

Special Funds

Z1 Special fund (this can only be used in line with revised plant health WIG guidance due for release in March).

Phytophthora X Funds

X2 – X8 Phytophthora Rhododendron clearance.

Chalara Plant Health WIG

Still eligible – will be merged into revised plant health WIG guidance due for release in March.

Appendix 2 – 15/16 Non-Eligible WIG Standard Costs

The list below shows those standard costs currently available within EWGS that will not be eligible under the new programme rules. Such items will need to be claimed before the 30th September 2015 to receive payment.

Public Access

A1-A28 We are hoping to fund public access in the new programme using an actual cost.

Mammal Management

C1-C5 Squirrel control will be dealt with in the new programme using the multi-annual element of Woodland Improvement Grant.

C7 Deer control will be dealt with in the new programme using the multi-annual element of Woodland Improvement Grant.

Tree Establishment

E8 Respacing natural regeneration – no similar option.

Fencing

F16 Fence Removal – no similar option.

Harvesting

H1-H3 There are currently no plans to offer grant for uneconomic thinning.

Labour and Machinery

L1-L7 Under the rules of the new programme we are not allowed to pay, under capital items, for any time related activity.

Vegetation Management

V11-V14 Ride management and mowing will be dealt with in the new programme using the multi-annual element of Woodland Improvement Grant.

V19 Ride Management – as above for V11-V14.

Special Funds

Z2 Special fund - £100 cost – no similar option.



The scheme is supported with European Union and Defra funding