

SEFTON COAST PARTNERSHIP

Woodland Owners Task Group

Thursday May 12th 2005

Present: N. Roche A. Ibbes A. Kimpton
 F. Robertson R. Northover Ian Kippax
 C. Barker

Apologies: Altcar, Paul Nolan

1. Matters Arising

Database – on Mersey Forest Website – NR looking at cost of converting this at present.

Woodland fayre – RN said had been told about 200 people attended ‘Bodgers’ Ball’ event at LBR on the Sunday. FR said not worth her time as only had 6 people all day. RN said been advertised through usual channels – look into this for any future event. Also to note that the event was the Bodgers’ national AGM which they had agreed to open up to the public. RN said the past few events had been organised and funded by the Council, with help from MF in the past. NR said that the feeling was that the previous year had not been value for money for people displaying.

Discussion on future woodland fayres. Suggested a big event every 2 years, September rather than spring but would need early planning and input from other partners. WOTG meeting in September to start planning for Sept 2006 (invite Fiona Sunners).

Lark Hill Farm – some individuals complaining. AI said tried to deal with issues through area committee. More work is scheduled. NR said good timing as money is available from ICEP now to remove sycamore and replace with pine. AK said that the work has already been consulted on so all that is needed is some interpretation on site. AI agreed that the issue is simply sycamore or squirrels? Get on with it! A press push from MF was suggested. RN said it helped having people on site to field questions. Where this not feasible, visual information is valuable. AK suggested tying in with Forest Fever (though too late for this year) or similar as MF events. It was agreed that a general release should be done for all winter work this year. Collect together all work plans for September meeting.

2. 2005 Targets

The targets in the table were agreed:

TARGET, 2005

	Thinning	Coupes	Nat regen	Planting
English Nature	18.67	(0.6)	1.9	0.16
Formby Golf Club	3.98	0.2	0	0.2
Formby Ladies Golf Club	0.11	0	0	0
Hesketh Golf Club	0.41	0.23	0	0.1
Lancashire Wildlife Trust	2.89	0	0	0
Hillside Golf Club	1.16	0.59	0	0.59
National Trust	17.41	0.9	0	0.5
Private, Freshfield Dune Heath	0.28	0	0	0
Private, Lark Hill Farm	1.36	0.37	0	0.37
Private, Lark Hill Farm House	0.63	(0.2)	0	0
Private, Pilkington Estate	2.54	0	0.3	0
RFCA	(2.69)	0	0	0.97
SMBC	2.7	1.09	0	4.01
S&A Golf Club	0.46	0.16	0	0.11
St Josephs Nursing Home	0	0	0	0.25
St Lukes Church	0	0	0	0.25
TOTAL	49.91	2.74	2.2	7.51

ACTION

NR

RN

NR

All

3. Baseline Data Update

NR has been working on refining the baseline data. He passed round results so far:

In terms of owner participation, with people slowly beginning to align themselves with the plan, there is now only 10ha remaining 'not active', with 410ha 'active'.

Form the original data it was impossible to tell accurately the breakdown of species and age as only the top line of data in the original spreadsheet was ever analysed for each compartment. NR using aerial photography and by walking through has improved accuracy to the point of being able to provide a true baseline for the management plan. The data shows that the broadleaf percentage is twice as high than the Plan recommendation at 20%. Most of this is birch which is not necessarily a problem, but will need a definitive statement and some guidelines for future planting.

In terms of conifer, it shows that it will be necessary to increase the percentage of SP as it is very low in the species breakdown. LP only has a 30/40 year life and percentage and the area needs to be reduced. The task group needs to discussion the mix of species.

All

The broadleaf breakdown gives quite a high ash proportion. Sycamore is still very high and needs to be kept at a manageable level. FR said Reds will eat the young shoots of syc rather than birch. NR said that the amount of sycamore must be limited to ensure that it does not take over in compartments and if owners retain it as a source of food for the red, then they must commit to managing it as an understory coppice.

White poplar is still very high %.

Age structure - the true age structure was obscured, but now with species and ownerships split out it is possible to see the very strong bias in the pine to old age, with a greater spread in the broadleaf areas.

4. Task Group Display Boards

No mock up available for this meeting.

All agreed that a display would be useful although golf courses had some reservations.

NR suggested a pull up display of 2 panels – approx 1k. MF may underwrite it but would need financial contribution from partners.

Subject – sustainable forestry. Not focussing totally on red squirrels. Commitment to provide photos, text etc.

All

Develop a draft for the next meeting to take to a designer. Agree to send photos and associated text. Active photos to go around a generic piece on Forest Plan, owners, map etc. NR to collate.

NR

Aim to have display in place for the 2006 Forum in Feb.

5. Forest Plan Review Process

NR suggested that the Forum be used as a way of consulting prior to the Review. This Task Group is very active but it was felt that this does not come across in the Forum. Will need a good presentation and plenty of preparation. NR to follow up – ABr and PN (?)

ABr
PN

6. The Mersey Forest Support to the Forest Plan

NR said the issue of monitoring and the need for officer support had first been raised by this Task Group. Disappointed that a Nature Conservation Strategy Officer was being appointed instead. Suggested that this Task Group should request the Partnership to consider the remit of the new officer at the Board Meeting.

RN said that the postholder initially had to produce the NC strategy in the first 2 years. After this there was potential for the post to continue and that monitoring/delivering NC outputs including woodlands would be central. (NB the review of the FP would have been undertaken as well at this point – NR's involvement in this process would be invaluable).

NR reiterated that MF is resourcing the Forest Plan currently and that this support cannot continue indefinitely at same level.

7. **A.O.B.**

FR passed round the Refuge and Buffer document. This is going to the Board on the 19th. Everyone has commented on this final draft.

RN said some issues about the Forest Plan had been raised at the NCTG meeting. Perhaps should attend at some future point with a report.

Date of Next Meeting

September 22nd 10am, ADC