

# Wales Land Management Forum (WLMF) Minutes

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<b>Title of meeting:</b>	Wales Land Management Forum (WLMF)
<b>Location:</b>	Microsoft Teams Meeting
<b>Date of meeting:</b>	11 <sup>th</sup> December 2023
<b>Members present:</b>	Professor Rhys Jones, NRW Board Member (Chair) Jon Goldsworthy, NRW Elaine Harrison, Confor Gareth Parry, FUW John Browne, NRW Dennis Matheson, TFA Rachel Lewis-Davies, NFU Cymru Tim Kirk, Confor Fraser McAuley, CLA Hedd Pugh, NFU Cymru Huwel Manley, NRW Lee Pritchard, Wales YFC
<b>Attendees present:</b>	Sue Buckingham, NRW
<b>Apologies:</b>	Ruth Jenkins, NRW Dom Driver, NRW Rhianne Jones, NRW Sarah Hetherington, NRW Marc Williams, NRW
<b>Secretariat:</b>	Bronwen Martin, NRW

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## Item 1. Introductions, Apologies and Declaration of Interest

1. Professor Rhys Jones (WLMF Chair) welcomed all to the meeting and noted apologies. Rhys welcomed Elaine Harrison to the meeting as the new representative for Confor.
2. No declarations of interest were raised in respect of Agenda items to be considered.
3. The group were reminded that the meeting was being recorded for the purpose of capturing the minutes and the digital file will be deleted once the meeting minutes have been compiled.

## Item 2. Minutes from the last meeting, actions & matters arising.

4. Once the meeting minutes have been reviewed and formally agreed they will be translated and published on the NRW website. The Group reviewed the minutes from the meeting held on 18<sup>th</sup> September 2023 and accepted them as a true record.
5. The group reviewed the outstanding actions and verbal updates were provided:

Sept AP 09: John Browne to look into whether there is an accurate figure for how much woodland is currently on farmland in Wales.

- John has spoken to Alex Harris, Welsh government who said 'there are several ways of defining farm woodland, and it's quite complex. However, the Forest Research statistics report the farm woodland in Wales as of 2022 to be 125,000 hectares'. The following link was shared with the group - [Forest Research: Forestry Statistics 2023](#)

Sept AP 10: Rachel Lewis Davies, NFU Cymru to check whether they submitted a formal letter to NRW detailing concerns around the planning system preventing compliance with the Control of Agricultural Pollution Regulations and NRW's role as a statutory consultee.

- Rachel said she would take this away and double check. The letter went to all the Local Planning Authorities (LPAs). Huwel mentioned that Alex Davies, NFU Cymru has been in contact with NRW to make progress. NRW have met with the LPAs across different parts of Wales to go through the process. Ultimately, the process is down to the LPA and the information that they require. The new NRW Control of Agricultural Pollution Team is also starting to work with some of the local member groups. Rachel said the County wanted to arrange an event where information is shared by NRW on the regulations, but also requested input from the LPA and NRW as statutory advisers. Huwel offered to be the point of contact for Rachel on this matter.
- Gareth Parry, FUW said they have received some correspondence from Welsh Government on the SuDS issue and the planning barriers that many FUW members are facing when attempting to receive planning permission for slurry stores etc. We've received a guidance document from Welsh Government that was published around 2 years ago. Gareth said that's now been reshared with the LPAs. However, it still doesn't quite make it clear as to when SuDS approval is required and not required. Gareth said FUW will be following this up in the new year.
- Regarding SuDS, Elaine mentioned that it was going to be reviewed as to whether it was applicable to forestry because that was one of the barriers of planning works. Elaine asked where that is in context to this discussion. Huwel was aware of an issue around forestry and SuDS. However, the interpretation of SuDS is slightly different by LPAs. Huwel said he would look into who is leading on that work and whether any progress has been made.

***AP December 01: Huwel Manley / John Browne, NRW to look into who is leading on forestry SuDS to see if there has been any progress made and feedback to the group.***

- John said this is quite a complicated area. SuDS does apply to forestry, but an update or statement from the person leading this work would be key.

Sept AP 11: Fraser McAuley, CLA to circulate a copy of the Cross-Party Group inquiry report when it is published.

- Fraser said this has not been published yet and might be delayed until around March 2024 now.

Sept AP 12: Jon Goldsworthy, NRW to liaise with colleagues regarding whether there was a consultation on the changes to sheep dip requirements and provide an update to the group.

- Jon said there wasn't an external consultation on this change, it's not usual for us to consult on changes of this nature to permit conditions. This query was about the briefing note regarding sheep dip. We've introduced this change to improve how we assess compliance, considering the increased number of water quality failures for diazinon in our surface water bodies. Diazinon was one of those elements that drove most new chemical failures in the last WFD classification. Previously, there wasn't a requirement for permit holders to notify us when they were disposing of spent sheep dip and that's something that is a requirement in other sectors, for example, land spreading of materials for agricultural benefit and the disposal of biosolids; both of those already require a pre notification. So, this was to bring the sheep dip in line with those. It's only currently a legal requirement for new permit holders, so those that have been issued since the 1st of April 2023 and that only that equates to actually 10 permits out of a thousand that we regulate. However, we are asking all existing permit holders to voluntarily notify us. We plan to put a condition in the permit on the next permit review for that sector, but there is no timeline for this yet.
- Rachel said it is disappointing that this change hasn't been subject to consultation because farmers dip for animal health and welfare reasons. Understanding the actual practicalities in informing NRW's decision would have been helpful in these circumstances. It's disappointing that we haven't had the opportunity to take the feedback from NFU Cymru members and feed that into your decision-making process. Jon said he can feed that back to the permitting team.

***AP December 02: Jon Goldsworthy, NRW to feedback comments regarding farmers not having the opportunity to feed into the sheep dip permit decision.***

- Rachel mentioned that this came up at the WLMF Sub Group, but we would like to have more understanding of the spatial distribution of the alleged failures. It seems like NRW has decided, but not all the information has been shared with the industry and it doesn't feel collaborative.
- Gareth suggested that the next steps are to make sure that this is communicated correctly and clearly. Gareth discussed the practicality of sheep dipping and circumstances where a farmer might need to dip straight away. Gareth suggested the need to have a further discussion around what happens in those scenarios (e.g., will there be a sort of force majeure process for emergency dipping situations) and where the farmer sits from a regulatory point of view.

- Lee Pritchard, Wales YFC reiterated earlier points and spoke from a farmers perspective – he generally dips his sheep around 3 times a year and the frequency of dipping can be impacted by others not dipping their sheep (it's not compulsory). Sheep scab is one of the biggest problems sheep farmers face and it's not going away anytime soon unless we encourage/enforce farmers that don't dip their sheep. Jon said this process really focuses on those that are complying with the legislation and getting a permit. Jon mentioned that he will be bringing a presentation to the WLMF Sub Group on the Teifi Demonstrator Project and perhaps this is an area that we can explore in a pilot catchment. Currently, chemical monitoring for diazinon is very sporadic but where we have tested for it, the positive results are indicated. We need to look at this more closely and it would be good if we could apply a collaborative approach.
  - Rachel reminded the group that one of the primary purposes of this forum is for there to be a no surprises approach. Decisions taken by NRW that affect farming, should be shared with this forum or the Sub Group on Agricultural Pollution at the earliest opportunity. There are benefits in doing that because we are very connected with the people on the ground who are affected by this and can ground truth and sense check approaches/decisions. Rachel said she hopes we can reach that point of collaboration which clearly has not been achieved on this decision.
  - Huwel asked what percentage of sheep dipping is done by farmers themselves, and what percentage is done by specialist contractors. Rachel said from her observation, this is an activity in the main undertaken by farmers. In the past, it was compulsory and subject to inspection by local officers. However, in the last few years there has been an increase of contracting which has been greatly accelerated by the Welsh Government Sheep Scab Eradication Project which can only be done through professional contractors. Rachel reiterated the importance of sheep dipping; it is a tool in the armoury and is absolutely vital for animal health and welfare. Permitting and the cost of new permits is an example of a barrier – we all have to work collaboratively as an industry to address this. We need to be enabling rather than making it difficult at a time when costs in general are escalating.
  - Lee reminded the group of challenges around contactor availability and the importance of animal health and welfare. If farmers are able to do it themselves, then it should be encouraged because there is a potential knock-on effect if one person in the area does not treat their sheep (e.g., time, money and mental health).
  - Rhys suggested that members of the WLMF can keep an eye on the implementation of this and report back to the group on the impact of this change and to reflect on any unintended consequences.
6. Rhys mentioned the documents and papers which were circulated ahead of the meeting.
  7. Dennis Matheson referenced the new National Park in North East Wales and asked if the actual boundary of this proposed area has been decided yet. Jon recalled that the area is part of the consultation, a decision will likely be made following that.

### Item 3. Forestry Regional Advisory Committee

8. John Browne, NRW provided a brief update on the newly formed Forestry Regional Advisory Committee (RAC). The first Forestry RAC meeting was held on 18<sup>th</sup> September 2023.
9. It is a statutory requirement that NRW has a Forestry Regional Advisory Committee (RAC) under Section 37 of the Forestry Act (1967). The Act has very specific clauses about the role and function of the RAC, and also its membership. In May 2022, a paper was presented to the NRW Board, and they approved the establishment of a Forestry RAC as a sub group of the Wales Land Management Forum. In order for the RAC to be a functioning committee, it would need to meet at least once a year, but thereafter it will be on a 'call off' basis or as needed.
10. The purpose of the RAC is to provide advice to NRW in respect of certain specific forestry functions, in accordance with the Forestry Act. John summarised the important principles and how the RAC will function. Only NRW can call upon the RAC for advice, it is not a route that is available to anybody else (e.g., any other stakeholders). We have developed internal guidance to make sure that NRW only seek advice in accordance with the Act when it is in our interest to do so and in appropriate circumstances. As per the Forestry Act, NRW are required to take account of any advice that the RAC tenders, but we do not have to act on any or part of it. We view seeking advice from the RAC as a very positive opportunity to inform and improve our decision making and support the Sustainable Management of Natural Resources (SMNR). John showed a diagram which outlined how the RAC will work and how it is linked with NRW's internal procedures.
11. Gareth said forest regulations affects agriculture in many ways and asked if NRW will be seeking agricultural input on the Forestry RAC or if not, will there be an opportunity for the group to seek independent expertise as and when required (not necessarily regarding agriculture). John said the Committee of Reference actually comprises experts suitable to consider the issue, which could potentially go beyond the actual RAC itself. The members that constitute the Committee as defined in the Act have to be professionally competent in the subject being looked at. John discussed an example where the RAC could be asked to look at afforestation and would therefore look at the Forestry Act (covers management of woodlands) as well as the Environmental Impact Assessment (Wales) Regulations 2017 (EIA Regs) and the interaction with the Agricultural EIA Regs.
12. Tim Kirk, Confor mentioned that he used to be a member of the panel. The Woodland Strategy Advisory Panel (WSAP) seriously needed to be reconvened. Tim found it astonishing that there was a statutory regulation that we had to be in place, but the Minister terminated it. Tim was subsequently appointed to the Welsh Government Statutory Panel for the Forestry Act, which seems to fulfil a number of purposes that the WSAP Committee was supposed to do (e.g., appeals against NRW or Welsh Government in forestry terms). Tim welcomed the reconvening of the RAC.
13. Rhys suggested sharing information about the membership of the Forestry RAC, if possible, to give confidence that these people are engaged with forestry matters and have a real depth of knowledge and experience. Rhys recalled that the first Forestry RAC meeting was held on 18<sup>th</sup> September 2023 and said he was very impressed with the quality, commitment and enthusiasm of the members.

**AP December 03: Bronwen Martin, NRW to look into whether information about the RAC membership can be shared with the WLMF (note: need to consider GDPR).**

14. Rhys clarified that although the Forestry RAC as a sub group of the WLMF, only NRW can convene a meeting. Elaine Harrison is a member of the Forestry RAC and is the link to the WLMF. John explained that the WLMF is the flagship and main mechanism of discussing land management issues relating to agriculture and forestry.

15. Rachel mentioned that there is no information on the NRW website about the Forestry RAC.

**AP December 04: Bronwen Martin, NRW to consult with colleagues about adding information about the Forestry RAC to the external NRW website.**

## Item 4. NRW Updates

16. Prior to the meeting, the WLMF Update Paper was circulated. Members are encouraged to review the document beforehand and come to the meeting with questions. Rhys acknowledged that a lot of time goes into producing the WLMF Update Paper and thanked those who have contributed.

17. Huwel provided a verbal update regarding Section 16 Management Agreements. These are standalone management agreements for land owners who have Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) on their land. They are a 5-year agreement, and the number of these signed agreements has generally fallen over the years but there has been an upward trend in the last two years or so. Huwel described the budget situation. Currently, there is a stop on Management Agreements and NRW are trying to find a way forward but are waiting for confirmation of budgets to progress. Rachel suggested that a written update would be helpful. Rachel asked if Welsh Government are signalling that the budget for Section 16 is going to increase going forward because there's likely to be a gap in funding otherwise. Huwel described the decision process around the budget. In terms of communication with the agricultural industry, NRW is currently working on some comms which we can share with the group in due course.

**AP December 05: Huwel Manley, NRW to share the communications around Section 16 Management Agreements.**

18. In the context of 30 by 30 and the existing SSSI network, Rachel recalled a previous presentation at a different forum and at the time, less than half of the designated sites had a Management Agreement. Rachel asked if NRW is scoping and preparing the business plan effectively in order to understand the budget needed to bring all these sites under management – we need to understand what the scale of the budget should be. There is a huge amount of ambition around the targets and NRW need to make the case to Welsh Government for that funding. Huwel mentioned that Glastir ends on 31<sup>st</sup> December, some would have applied for the interim Habitat Wales Scheme, and we are still trying to get exact details on what the dropout rate is so that we can map the SSSIs. There are discussions with Welsh Government around the SFS and the requirements, but we currently don't know the economic detail for the SFS. Rachel suggested that NRW should look very closely at the SFS consultation when it is published. Huwel said NRW will be formally responding to the consultation. Rachel reiterated that we need a budget that matches the scale of the ambition.

19. Fraser McAuley, CLA mentioned that his colleague was at a tourism meeting yesterday and a number of sites were discussed such as Ynys Las. Fraser asked for clarification if this was related to Section 16 Agreements. Huwel said no, this was probably in relation to the visitor centres and discussions around the current delivery model.
20. Rachel noted the written updates on the Natural Resources Policy (NRP) and the Area Statements and asked if Welsh Government is planning to consult publicly. Jon said NRW are in early discussions in terms of the review and what Welsh Government want from us. Rachel said the Act does not include a specific requirement to consult, but there is a requirement to publish a summary of any consultation undertaken.
21. Rachel asked prior to the refresh of Area Statements, has NRW done a 'lessons learnt' exercise. Huwel said some of the Area Statements refer to obsolete issues and provided some examples (e.g., prioritisation). However, updating them will be light touch rather than a fundamental shift (e.g., change in wording, referring to European funds that are delivering some key work areas etc.). Huwel welcomed a discussion around this. We try to coordinate the Area Statements so that they are consistent across Wales, but the diversity of the Welsh landscape is quite different from place to place which is reflected in some of the more local elements. Rachel said NFU Cymru has tried to encourage their members to attend Area Statement events, but they were quite alienating to the farming community on times. Some sort of discussion around this might be helpful.
22. Rhys asked the group if a future presentation about Area Statements would be helpful and maybe exploring whether it is possible for the WLMF to feedback on some of the proposed tweaks or changes. Jon suggested covering Area Statements, Natural Resources Policy and perhaps State of Natural Resources Report (SoNaRR) at the next meeting.

***AP December 06: Bronwen Martin, NRW to look into arranging a future presentation on Area Statements, Natural Resources Policy and perhaps State of Natural Resources Report (SoNaRR).***

23. Jon provided a brief verbal update regarding NRW's involvement in the SFS. NRW have been working with Welsh Government on developing the scheme. Welsh Government are due to publish the SFS consultation shortly. Jon encouraged the group to review the consultation and respond – this is a good opportunity to communicate concerns and provide feedback on the scheme. Welsh Government also plan to host a series of SFS engagement events around Wales for farmers to attend and ask questions.
24. No further comments were made in respect of the written NRW updates provided prior to the meeting.

**Item 5. Updates from FUW / NFU Cymru / Wales YFC / Confor / CLA / TFA / Welsh Government**

25. **FUW:** Gareth Parry said the upcoming SFS consultation is likely going to take up a lot of time over the next few months – there are plans to engage with the counties on this.

There is a huge concern around future budgets for agriculture and FUW has written a joint letter to the First Minister (many other stakeholder organisations signed that letter). We get to see what the draft budget looks like later this month. The Habitat Wales Scheme is also in the background and there's a question mark on the future support for organic farming as well.

Gareth mentioned the increase in costs for sheep dip permits and FUW have corresponded with Clare Pillman, NRW regarding the breakdown of the costs, but it still doesn't quite provide us with enough detail as to how NRW have worked out the hourly rate for the number of hours it tends to take to issue a new permit. FUW will be delving into that further.

FUW have been involved in the Nutrient Trading Group and the report was presented at the third River Pollution Summit last week. That report has been shared with the WLMF Sub Group. It is a very well written report and sets the scene in terms of the number of areas that need to be explored and addressed before we can even consider bringing in a nutrient trading mechanism into SAC catchments.

26. **NFU Cymru:** Rachel mentioned the Habitat Wales Scheme and the concern around the Glastir funding cliff edge – there is a lot of disillusionment in the future direction of travel. The ambition is big, but the current budget does not match it and farmers are very worried.

Rachel discussed the work on phosphates which has taken up a lot of time. NFU Cymru has also been involved in the Nutrient Trading Task and Finish group and the SAC Rivers Agricultural Technical Group.

NFU Cymru has been involved with the Net Zero 2035 and attended some workshops in recent weeks. The UK Climate Change Committee has established an Agricultural Advisory Group to provide advice on Carbon Budget 7 – NFU Cymru looks forward to being involved in that work moving forward.

The SFS is also going to be a big focus for NFU Cymru over the next three to six months. This is the biggest consultation in our living history, and it will set the direction of travel for farming for the next decade – it is vital that we get that right.

The guidance on the Enhanced Nutrient Management Approach is expected in the next few days and NFU Cymru will be looking closely at that and sharing it with their members.

The White Paper on Environmental Principles and Biodiversity Targets is expected in the New Year.

The closing date of the Charge Payers Consultation is early in the New Year. Rachel echoed Gareth's points regarding the breakdowns of costs and said the credibility is really hard to see. Rachel suggested that some independent verification is needed because the costs seem really high – these comments will be fed into the NRW consultation response.

Rachel reiterated that there is a lot going on and the need to efficiently manage workload. Having a heads up to anticipate new consultations that they need to feed into would help (e.g., possible consultation on Natural Resources Policy).



Hedd Pugh asked if there was an update on the beaver release in the Dyfi Valley and if there is a time scale regarding the application for licensing release. Jon and Huwel said they would check with colleagues on this.

***AP December 07: Jon Goldsworthy and Huwel Manley to follow up with colleagues regarding an update on beaver release in the Dyfi Valley.***

A briefing note has been provided, but it would be good to follow up with an update for the next meeting. Bronwen clarified that the briefing note was on beaver liability.

27. **Wales YFC:** Lee Pritchard provided a brief written update. Wales YFC will be spending a lot of time looking at the SFS consultation and will be working with NFU Cymru and FUW to hold workshops with members to raise their concerns. Wales YFC are also holding the AGR124 conference in January focusing on the Supply Chain.
28. **Confor:** Elaine Harrison had to leave the meeting. Tim Kirk mentioned the continuing major concern over new planting and the permissions that are being granted. The Welsh achievement is truly pathetic, when you look at the National graphs, Wales' contribution is so small you can't really see it. This is not helped by the Welsh Government ambitions on the 30,000 hectares a year because this is simply not possible. There needs to be some realism around this so that we can succeed. It takes longer to get planning permission for new planting than it does to get planning permission for a new house.
29. **CLA:** Fraser McAuley provided a brief written update. The new CLA Cymru Director started last week, Victoria Bond, and she will be contacting various stakeholders over the next week or two to introduce herself. Two other key areas of work relating to land management include preparation for the SFS consultation and finalising the CPG report ready for printing and releasing early next year.
30. **TFA Cymru:** Dennis Matheson echoed Tim's points on the ambition of the Welsh Government for the number of trees planted – this is not obtainable, and they should rethink. Dennis said he put this to Welsh Government at an SFS meeting last week and asked if they had a Plan B if they get to 2029 and only planted about 20,000 hectares instead of 43,000 hectares and that was dismissed completely.

Dennis mentioned discussions from the Winter Fair. TFA Cymru spent a lot of time discussing the SFS with Welsh Government. Whilst we were very pleased that tenants would be exempted from the 10% tree cover requirement if they couldn't get their landlords to agree; we also need the same thing for habitats because very few tenants would have 10% habitat and would very likely want landlords permission again. In the SFS document that we saw last week, there were six possible things a farmer could do to increase the area of habitat, of which four were arable, which is not very helpful for somebody on the top of Snowden and one of those arable was no inputs i.e., a wildlife or game crop. Discussions are continuing but currently, Welsh Government don't agree with us that tenants can't comply.

Another concern is around the disjoint between how RPW will treat cross compliance breaches of the Control of Agricultural Pollution Regulations. This has stalled because it's in retained EU law, but we've been assured that when the new scheme comes out, they will take a more proportional approach and align with the way NRW deal with it.

Dennis mentioned the Phosphate Summit. As far as trading phosphates or carbon credits to multinational companies who are producing both and offsetting that by trying to get farmers to give away their credits (in this case for housebuilders), it is completely the wrong approach because it's not reducing pollution at all –it's just shifting it around.

## Item 6. Forward Look

31. Rhys summarised some of the potential topics for future agendas including Area Statements, Natural Resources Policy and perhaps State of Natural Resources Report (SoNaRR). Rhys asked if there were any other suggestions.
32. Tim said MS Teams meetings are fine, but they don't tease out the real issues that we used to see when we all met in person. We also don't know everyone on the group, for example some people have never met the Chair Professor Rhys in person. The original in person committee meetings were first class and all the work took place in between sessions. It was a really good meeting of all the various unions and land representatives. Tim asked that the group consider reinstating those in person meetings at least every other session. Rhys suggested that we could maybe rethink the balance between these virtual meetings and face to face meetings and welcomed the group's input. Rhys said there is probably a discussion to be had internally within NRW regarding resourcing face-to-face meetings. It might be useful to see what the other fora groups do and what their general pattern of meetings looks like.

### ***AP December 08: Rhys Jones to talk to Ruth Jenkins about having a possible in-person meeting later in 2024.***

33. Huwel said there can be a benefit to bringing people together. Another alternative is to look at suitable locations try and cut down the travel (e.g., two venues) and finding an option that works for everyone. It's disappointing when you arrange a meeting and only a few people turn up and the others want to dial in. Rhys said the hybrid option is often a bit messy. Jon reminded the group that each person would probably have a slightly different view about the format of meetings but its finding the balance. There are benefits to meeting in a room and those kinds of discussions that happen outside of the formal agenda are really helpful. Perhaps one in-person meeting a year would be appropriate, but we need to think about the resource, travelling time, costs etc. It is vital to consider how many people will realistically attend, for example there has been quite a few people that haven't been able to attend today. Hybrid meetings can work well if there is someone to cover the IT side of things.
34. Dennis agreed with Tim's comments about having more face-to-face meetings. The Welsh Government Offices are still open at vast expense, being heated with a skeleton staff and hardly used at all. Dennis acknowledged that a hybrid meeting would be a very good idea.
35. Rhys said generally, members seem to be supportive of the need to have a face-to-face meeting over the course of the year, but we will need to talk to NRW colleagues about what is possible and look at the pattern that is being followed by other fora. We will hopefully have proposal for the next WLMF meeting.
36. Tim said it is very easy to make the excuse of 'it is inconvenient' and discussed whether jobs can be done properly without the interaction with universal colleagues.

Tim said it is inconvenient but encouraged the group to attend the future in-person meeting.

37. Sue Buckingham, NRW requested an agenda item on reducing ammonia emissions from agriculture near protected sites. The update will include new information that's coming out that will influence it, because obviously the targets for ammonia reduction are getting ever closer for 2030. The further the can is kicked down the road, the harder it's going to be the farmers to meet those targets. We want to be transparent and start sharing this information and having open discussions now and hopefully get this feeding into the SFS so that farmers have the appropriate support. Rhys recalled the ammonia presentation that Sue, and Brian gave at the WLMF Sub Group which was very useful.
38. Rhys suggested that a possible presentation from Professor John Gilliland is being explored. Rhys is keen to hear more about the Integrated National Land Use Strategy for Northern Ireland that Professor John has been involved in. There isn't an Integrated Land Use Strategy for Wales and is interested in exploring whether there is any value in us playing a role in feeding into a potential strategy for Wales.
39. Bronwen said colleagues have also approached her with some potential themed topics for our meetings next year, these include food and fibre and another one on soil. Bronwen reminded the group that they can email any potential items to her.
40. Rachel said if there is a session on soils, then it would be useful to invite James Cooke, who's leading the Welsh Government soils evidence programme. There's a huge body of work that's been undertaken that provides a useful insight to the Welsh context that's often overlooked. Huwel suggested Dr Peter Jones, NRW would also be a good person to invite. Dr Peter Jones is our peatland ecologist and specialist and has some very interesting infographics which would be quite good to share, especially around the impacts of emission loss through intensive management of peat soils for agriculture. Jon said his team are working really closely with James Cooke and his team in Welsh Government and some sort of combined presentation between NRW and Welsh Government would be really good. Dennis recalled his previous discussions with James Cooke and agreed that a presentation from him would be good.

***AP December 09: Bronwen Martin, NRW to invite James Cooke, Welsh Government to present at a future soils themed meeting.***

## **Item 7. Any Other Business**

41. The dates for 2024 will be circulated in due course – WLMF members are encouraged to suggest potential agenda items and discussion topics, please forward them to Bronwen.
42. Rachel requested that the next meeting is scheduled after the closing date for the Welsh Government SFS Consultation.

***AP December 10: Bronwen Martin, NRW to arrange the next WLMF meeting after the closing date for the Welsh Government SFS Consultation.***

43. Rhys thanked the group for all of their contributions this year and wished everyone a Happy Christmas and a relaxing break.

44. No other business was raised.

**Close meeting**