



www.forestcertification.org.uk

UKFCG E-NEWS

MAY 2017

UKWAS Version 4 – Conditionally approved

On 3rd May FSC announced the forest certification standard for the UK has been conditionally approved. The standard, familiar to forest managers as the UK Woodland Assurance Standard or UKWAS, has undergone a thorough revision process which began in 2013. A draft submitted to FSC International last year was not approved, and underwent further revision before being resubmitted in February this year. This revised draft was conditionally approved following a meeting of FSC's Policy and Standards Committee (PSC) in early April.

The conditional approval of the standard means there is no further requirement for it to be considered by the PSC. All subsequent discussions about the contents of the standard will be with FSC Policy and Standards Unit (PSU) staff in Bonn.

UKWAS Steering Group will be meeting in early June when it is anticipated that finalisation of details will be agreed to enable UKWAS version 4 to be endorsed and launched later this summer.

Timing is good for UKFCG with our imminent re-evaluation audit which will be conducted using UKWAS version 3.1. which means no last minute changes necessary for the forests selected for this audit.

We believe there will be a few months overlap between UKWAS version 3.1 and a deadline for all certificate holders to have adopted the new version 4.

In anticipation of the announcement UKFCG has already prepared a draft working checklist for UKWAS v4 which we have trialled on a number of forest audits in recent weeks.

We are pleased to report that we do not envisage any difficulties with ongoing compliance for UKFCG members, despite the change in emphasis for a number of the Means of Verification and the addition of a small number of new requirements.

Over the next few months we will be revising all UKFCG templates, documents and briefing notes to be correctly cross-referenced with UKWAS v4. We will prepare additional sample Policy Documents, to reflect the new layout of UKWAS, which will be made available to all our members. Adoption of the Policies, which can be tailored to individual needs, will strengthen the evidence we can offer during external audits to confirm compliance with UKWAS v4.

Ongoing analysis and field trials of UKWAS v4 over the next few weeks will lead to production of a Briefing Note which will highlight the main changes from v3.1 and our recommendations to UKFCG members of any procedural, operational or policy changes which may be necessary. The Briefing Note will be circulated to all UKFCG members along with an electronic copy of the finalised UKWAS v4.

Please be assured that outcomes of field trials of UKWAS v4 to date have been positive, we will provide ongoing support and guidance to all our members during forthcoming surveillance audits to ensure a smooth transition from UKWAS v3.1 to v4. Do let us know if you have any questions on this subject.

We look forward to meeting you all again in the near future.

Paul Sandys
2 South View
Sandford, Crediton,
Devon, EX17 4LP

m: 07803 619249
e: ukfcg@hotmail.com



Phil Webb
Urchany Cottage,
Beauly,
Inverness-shire, IV4 7AE

t: 01463 782536
m: 07970 388 940
e: ukfcg@hotmail.com