

SIMPLIFICATION TASKFORCE  
Forestry Grants sub-group meeting  
Monday 25<sup>th</sup> March 2019 – Longman House, Inverness

ATTENDEES

SG Members

Marcus Mackenzie (Chair)  
Lindsay Bisset FCS

External Members

Anne Rae MacDonald  
Malcolm Morrison  
Miller Harris

Apologies

Claudia Rowse SNH

The Customer Service Representative Group Review of the FGS Support to Small Land Owners had been shared with the group prior to the meeting. This provided the main discussion points for the group.

Anne ran through the table of barriers and potential solutions (from the Customer Representative Group review) to encourage small scale woodland creation with the collective thinking from the earlier meeting with Anne, Claudia and Malcom. This generated much discussion and I acknowledged that it was going to be too difficult to minute. Lindsay agreed to incorporate the comments into the main report to ensure we have a combined response. He has agreed to forward his draft in due course, hopefully next week.

Regarding the main topic of encouraging small scale woodland creation there were some main points from my notes, in no particular order and please feel free to amend:

- The application process is arduous for all, farmers/crofters/agents
- Is small scale woodland creation an attractive proposition to farmers/crofters?
- What are the main barriers – The draft paper will illustrate these.
- Should small scale forestry be re-invented?
- Where should small scale applications lie, with Forestry or Agriculture?
- Small woodland creation is difficult as there is a cost to getting to the first stage and often falls at the first hurdle. This puts off prospective candidates.
- Getting advice at an early stage from FCS would benefit and Lindsay noted that there is resource available to do that, producers are possibly unaware of this though.
- Raising awareness of both the woodland grants and the early advice is key to making progress
- The Monitor Farm initiative may be the best way of raising this awareness
- An additional Monitor Farm could be introduced with one of the few small scale operations that have got off the ground

- Payments are too slow, particularly with capital claims, again putting off farmers/crofters

As I noted at the meeting, I think it would be good to have Anne/Malcom to play back the activities from this sub-group to the next STF at the meeting on 24th April.