



**Heartwoods West Midlands
Woodfuel Project**

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Our Mission:

To significantly increase the use of wood for fuel in the West Midlands of England and facilitate the development of a sustainable woodfuel supply chain.

Heartwoods is a project of Small Woods
Registered Charity No. 1081874

Transitional EWGS Arrangements

The Forestry Commission have issued transitional arrangements for the English Woodland Grant Scheme, from the current programme into the next programme. These are subject to budget constraints.

Woodland Planning Grant— open to new applicants.

Woodland Management Grant—now closed to new applicants.

Woodland Regeneration Grant—open to new applicants until September 2014.

Woodland Improvement Grant—open to new applicants until September 2014, but capital grants for payment from 15/16 must adhere to new rules, such as management plans.

Woodfuel Woodland Improvement Grant—new applications accepted until September 2014.

New contracts for WWIG will need to be approved by 31 December 2014. To allow payment to be made all claims must be submitted by 30 September 2015.

Woodland Creation Grant— currently closed to new applicants but recent announcements indicate that funding will be available for the 14/15 planting season.

All woodland grant activity (except woodland creation) funded under the next Rural Development Programme from 15-16 onwards will require a management plan.

More information can be found at: <http://www.forestry.gov.uk/pdf/England-ON029-v1.0.pdf/England-ON029-v1.0.pdf>



HEARTWOODS NEWSLETTER

FEBRUARY 2014

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Business resilience—help available

Welcome to the latest Heartwoods Newsletter.

I hope the current and relentless weather patterns are not proving to be a show stopper for businesses in the wood-fuel supply chain. I find it hard to imagine that it is not having a detrimental effect for some.

We hear much about the resilience of our woodlands in the face of threatening pests and diseases. Important issues without a doubt, but just as important is the resilience of businesses in the sector—without them we would not have the means to manage the woodlands and bring timber to the market. Two things that might help:

- Details of the final round of FFIS can be found on page two of the newsletter and these grants could be a welcome shot in the arm for forestry businesses needing to invest in new equipment.
- The announcement made last week by Prime Minister, David Cameron outlining a range of measures aimed at helping businesses affected by the floods, including : a grant of up to £5000 to build in better flood protection; a £10 million fund for farmers who have seen their land waterlogged; VAT, PAYE and corporation tax deferral for three months; and 3 months 100% business rate relief.

What constitutes a ‘business affected by the flooding’ is not entirely clear at present but it would be worth keeping an eye on this announcement and the subsequent implementation.

Here’s hoping for some drier weather and I hope to see you at some of our upcoming events (page 3)

Mike Bentley—Heartwoods Project Manager



Farming and Forestry Improvement Scheme (FFIS)

Round 3 of the Farming and Forestry Improvement Scheme (FFIS) has now been launched and is expected to award around £10m of grants under FFIS in this third round. The selection process for FFIS is competitive. This means that there is no guarantee of success and not all projects which are eligible will be awarded grant, or at the amount of grant requested. Applicants are advised to read the Applicant Handbook very carefully as some of the conditions, eligible items and submission arrangements have changed since Round 2. The round will close on Friday 4 April 2014 but applications will be considered as they come in, so don't delay.

Several forestry businesses in the region have benefitted from previous rounds of this scheme, which can support businesses in the purchase of forestry equipment. Eligible equipment includes: harvester heads, forestry trailers, forwarders, firewood processors and mobile saw mills.

More information can be found at: <http://rdpenetwork.defra.gov.uk/>



Tree Health Update

Tree Pests and Diseases continue to be a top priority for woodland managers and owners. The Forestry Commission have issued an update on the current Tree Health situation, which can be found on the Heartwoods website. <http://heartwoods.co.uk/other/forestry-commission-tree-health-update/>

The Royal Forestry Society have recently carried out a survey on grey squirrel damage in woodlands, which will hopefully inform government policy on grey squirrel control and help owners protect their woodland. <http://www.rfs.org.uk/node/1134>

Upcoming Events

Hardwood Thinnings and Self-Supply

This event will look at thinning broadleaved woodlands using mechanical methods and woodfuel supply on the estate.

When? - Wednesday 12th March 2014

Where? - Dudmaston Estate, Bridgnorth, Shropshire, WV15 6QN

Pheasants and Firewood

Learn how managing your woodland can benefit your shoot.

When? - 14th April 2014

Where? - Countryside Training, Stafford, ST18 0YB



These events cost £10.00 which includes refreshments and lunch.

They are targeted at woodland owners and managers within the West Midlands. To book your place, contact Harriet Wood at Heartwoods on 01952 435860 or email harrietwood@smallwoods.org.uk

Managing Woodlands for Multiple Objectives Event

The second Heartwoods event of the extended programme was held at Wood Farm in Staffordshire, on the 24th January. Nick Brandrick, owner of Wood Farm, who has extended the woodland on his former dairy farm, with new planting schemes, welcomed woodland owners and contractors to the farm.

Speakers from the Forestry Commission, the Deer Initiative, Heartwoods and the Environment Agency, started the day by updating participants about the various schemes available. This was followed by a tour of the woodland and demonstrations of various small to medium scale equipment, including a mulcher used to clear rhododendron as part of *Phytophthora ramorum* control measures.

