

A photograph of a forest floor covered in fallen leaves, with a large pile of cut logs in the foreground and trees in the background.

Increasing timber production from small private woodlands in England: Effectiveness of initiatives

APPENDICES: profiles and methods

Star Molteno and Anna Lawrence

Forest Research is the Research Agency of the Forestry Commission and is the leading UK organisation engaged in forestry and tree related research. The Agency aims to support and enhance forestry and its role in sustainable development by providing innovative, high quality scientific research, technical support and consultancy services.

Forest Research is the Research Agency of the Forestry Commission and is the leading UK organisation engaged in forestry and tree related research. The Agency aims to support and enhance forestry and its role in sustainable development by providing innovative, high quality scientific research, technical support and consultancy services.

An appropriate citation for this report is: Molteno, S. and Lawrence, A., (2013) Increasing timber production from small private woodlands in England: effectiveness of interventions and initiatives. Appendices. Forest Research, Alice Holt, Farnham.

Acknowledgements

This report is based on research conducted for the "Developing an Evidence Base for Furthering the Use of English Wood Products in a Range of Markets" project funded by DEFRA (contract WC0815), and was written with additional support from the Forestry Commission. The authors would like to thank all the participants in this research, and Elspeth Macdonald for comments on an earlier draft.

Contents

Appendix 1. Profiles	3
a) Blackdown and East Devon Woodland Association / Woodbiz.....	3
b) Chiltern Woodlands Project	6
c) Cumbria Woodlands	10
d) Heartwoods	13
e) Mersey Forest	18
f) Northwoods	22
g) Oxfordshire Woodland Project	26
h) Ward Forester	30
i) Woodfuel East	33
j) Woodnet.....	38
Appendix 2. Woodland initiatives identified: complete list	43
Appendix 3. List of respondents	44
Appendix 4. Guide questions for initiatives	46

Appendix 1. Profiles

a) Blackdown and East Devon Woodland Association / Woodbiz

The Blackdown and East Devon Woodland Association has overseen several projects in recent years to stimulate productive woodland management. Woodbiz woodlands is a new project continuing from the Working our Woodlands project which ran from November 2009- October 2011 that aimed to stimulate greater management of private small woodlands through the advice provided by its local Woodland Resource Coordinator. Woodbiz woodlands is part of the Forestry Commission Neroche's Beef, Butterflies and Trees project and the emphasis is on local, independent advice to woodland owners. Both projects have been delivered in partnership with the Blackdown and East Devon Woodland Association, the driving force behind this is John Greenshields, a local farmer and woodland owner.

Key features of the initiative:

- Led by a key local individual, using in-depth local knowledge to support woodland owners
- Offers a brokering service to help local businesses make better use of locally-sourced timber.
- The woodland association ran two Blackdown Woodland Fairs held at Park Farm, Wellington - the second Fair in July 2011 attracted over 2000 visitors.

Aims:

- Woodbiz Woodlands is working to get more local timber used in local saw mills and made available to local furniture makers, historic building restorers and other manufacturers with an interest in quality local timber
- Woodbiz Woodlands is looking to begin building a more viable, economic, and climate-proofed woodland resource for the future of the area
- Woodbiz Woodlands will bring together small woodland management contractors, log suppliers and volunteers to find economic and rewarding ways of managing small woodlands which are not currently viable to manage [1]

Mechanisms:

Stakeholder	Activity	Part of current project?
Woodland owners:	Engagement	Y
	Advice – woodland management	Y
	Advice – Business related	
	Grant aid or support with grants applications	
	Training	Y
	Direct management of woods	Y
	New planting	Y
Contractors and Processors:	Advice – Business related	Y
	Training	
Buyers of wood products:	Promoting local brands	Y
	Events (wood fairs etc)	Y
	Networking across the chain	Y

Profile:
1. About the initiative

1.2 Website	http://www.woodbiz.co.uk/
1.3 Region covered	Blackdown Hills and East Devon AONB's
1.4 Date started	Blackdown and East Devon Woodland Association has been going since 1998. Woodbiz runs from November 2011 to December 2013
1.5 Origins of intervention	Follows from Working our Woodlands project (2009-2011)
1.6 Staff numbers	1 part time (16 hrs/wk) [2]
1.7 Formal structure	None.
1.8 Formal relationship to other organisation	Operates with the Blackdown and East Devon Woodland Association, the Forestry Commission and the AONB's.
1.9 Overseen by	A steering group meets 4 times a year made up of Borough tree officers, Forestry Commission, wildlife trusts, Blackdown Hills AONB members and Natural England [2].
1.10 Funding sources	Woodbiz: RDPE through 'Making it Local' and FC through Woodland Carbon Task Force. Woodland Association supported by members fees (£15pa)[3]
1.11 Annual running costs	[no data]

2. Activities with woodland owners

2.1 How contact is made?	'Most of them come to me, because of the limited hours that Forestry Commission officers can now work. In the old days you rang up a woodland officer and they'd be round the next day to have a look at your woodland. But they just can't do that now because they haven't got the manpower.' [2] 'We've got tons of information now. We've done two woodland surveys on these hills and we've got the name of virtually every woodland owner'. [2]
2.2 How many owners worked with	Earlier project 'Working our Woodlands' (09-11) made 65 advisory visits to 44 small/medium woodland owners. [4]
2.3 What coverage does this represent?	Earlier project 'Working our Woodlands' (09-11) brought 35 woodlands into active management, totalling approximately 500 hectares. [4]
2.4 What services offered?	Free half-day advisory visits for owners of small woodlands that have been out of management in the past. The living Timber bank: The project will provide a brokering service between the wood supplier, the sawmill, and the furniture manufacturer or other timber user. A living tree grading programme will help owners understand the value of their trees and timber and make sure they get the best value for them in the future. Training courses run.
2.5 Business advice offered?	No.
2.6 Woodland	'We are spearheading woodland creation using alien species of trees

creation? using EWGS Forestry Commission grants' [2].

3. Activities with other sector constituents

3.1 Work with contractors? 'Woodbiz Woodlands will bring together small woodland management contractors, log suppliers and volunteers to find economic and rewarding ways of managing small woodlands which are not currently viable to manage'[4].

'Obviously I can't recommend people but I can steer people to who's nearest. It's the same with contractors. Our website has a list of contractors. What I say is I recommend everybody on our website and you are best picking the nearest guy' [2].

'We have set up a log supply group which is affiliated to the woodland association' [2].

3.2 Work with processors?

No

3.3 Work to stimulate the market?

Culmwoods woodland co-op is a separate project within the Blackdown and East Devon Woodland Association. It is a members co-op 'bringing together like minded people that need woodfuel to manage woodlands that would not normally be managed because of cost restraints'.[5]

3.4 Networking?

Through local knowledge. Culmwoods rests on this.

Woodland Association runs an annual Woodland fair [5]

3.5 Publications produced

Two surveys of the area have been made [6]

4. Relationships with other stakeholders

4.1 Relationship with private sector

'What I'm very conscious of is I don't want to do any contractors out of work. So these jobs... the contractors here would still get the same work, but they wouldn't do all the messy stuff and the tidying up' [talking of Culmwoods project] [2]

4.2 Relationship with Forestry Commission

'Because I know a lot of the forestry guys in the commission, if a woodland owner rings them up and says I don't know what to do with my woodland they say 'ring John Greenshields' it's a nice feeling to know that they are trusting me to do that.' [2]

4.3 Relationship with Local Action Group

The Local Action Group 'Making it Local' funds the project.

4.4 Relationship with other interventions

Local connections to Somerset woodlands (similar association model to Blackdown and East Devon Woodland Association).

5. Reflections on initiative

5.1 Most successful outcome?

'It's probably is not necessarily to manage woodlands but getting people to think about managing. I had a lovely letter the other day from a lady who said she'd almost forgotten about her woods and now she's really enthused and she's got people to go in and have a look bat people and dormice people and she's going to do a bit of thinning. Once they think about it then the doing comes afterwards.' [2]

5.2 What has helped make the project successful?

'The Steering group I feel is one of the most useful aspects as they can be called on to advise, steer, and give contacts.' [2]

'A knowledgeable local person is what's needed to run these projects. It's no good bringing someone in from outside. That's where things have gone wrong in the past. You need to be local and have local knowledge I

think that's very important. I basically know everybody in the whole area. I've been farming here for about 50 years.' [2]

5.3 Problems encountered?

'I'm very lucky that I've got a line manager who does all the paperwork. If I had to do all the paperwork I wouldn't be able to do what I'm doing.' [2]

'Problems of being the officer have been nil. I can't think of any. Everybody is so very, very nice. Its not me knocking on their door, they've already said they want me to come.' [2]

5.4 Securing funding issues

'I'm hoping that the woodland association is standing on its own two feet so they may fund me for a couple of days a month to carry on the work.' [2]

Sources:

1. Blackdown and East Devon Woodland Association, *Woodbiz flyer*. 2011, Blackdown and East Devon Woodland Association.
2. Greenshields, J., *Interview*. 2013, Blackdown Hills Woodland Association.
3. Neroche. *Initiative website*. 2013 18.03.13]; Available from: <http://www.nerochescheme.org/nerocheProjects.php>.
4. Silvanus Trust. *Initiative Website*. 2013 23.02.13].
5. Blackdown and East Devon Woodland Association. *Initiative Website*. 2013 16.03.13].
6. Greenshields, J., *Working our woodlands: Woodland resources survey November 2009-November 2011*. 2011, Blackdown Hills Woodland Association.

b) Chiltern Woodlands Project

The Chiltern Woodlands Project covers the area around the Chilterns AONB, which spans across four County Councils. The project has been going for over 20 years in different guises and one key individual has been central throughout this time. The project focuses primarily on bringing unmanaged woodlands into management through advice and support.

Key features of the initiative:

- In-depth local knowledge gained over a long time working in one area
- The project has evolved away from reliance on local authority support
- The heritage value of the trees and woodlands is particularly valued in this project, which also has the aim of increasing the public acceptance of woodland work.

Aims:

- Landscape: to protect and enhance the landscape of the Chilterns.
- Biodiversity: to maintain and enhance the biodiversity of the Chilterns.
- Economy: to promote a sustainable woodland economy in the Chilterns.
- Community: to increase awareness, understanding, and enjoyment of the Chiltern woodland.
- Historic Environment: to raise awareness of the history and archaeology in woods across the Chilterns

'The aim of the Chiltern Woodlands Project is to promote and encourage the sensitive and sustainable management of Chiltern woods in order to protect the landscape of the Chilterns and maintain and enhance its biodiversity' [1].

Mechanisms:

Stakeholder	Activity	Part of current project?
Woodland owners:	Engagement	Y
	Advice –woodland management	Y
	Advice –Business related	
	Grant aid or support with grants applications	Y
	Training	Y
	Direct management of woods	
	New planting	Y
Contractors and Processors:	Advice –Business related	
	Training	
	Grant aid or support with grants applications	
Buyers of wood products:	Promoting local brands	
	Events (wood fairs etc)	Y
	Networking across the chain	Y

Profile:

1. About the initiative	
1.2 Website	http://www.chilternsaonb.org/woodlands-project.html
1.3 Region covered	The Chilterns Character Area, which includes all of the Chilterns AONB.
1.4 Date started	1989
1.5 Origins of intervention	Started as The Chiltern's Society Small Woodlands project in 1983 [2]
1.6 Staff numbers	1
1.7 Formal structure	A registered charity and a company limited by guarantee
1.8 Formal relationship to other organisation	'The Chilterns Conservation Board that run the Chilterns AONB are our host organization, they give office space and some funding' [2]
1.9 Overseen by	A Board of Directors controls the Charity's work; they are also its Trustees. The Trustees include representatives from Local Government, the Chilterns Conservation Board(CCB), The Chiltern Society and a number of independent members. They normally meet at least three times a year together with a steering group drawn from officers of the funding local authorities, Forestry Commission and Chilterns Conservation Board, who offer expert advice. The Directors have overall responsibility for the financial control of the charity, for agreeing its budget and work plans. The Director produces an annual report each year.[3]

1.9 Funding sources	Grants (WMG) Service Level Agreements with Local Authorities Heritage Lottery Fund (supported 'Special Trees and Woodlands' project 2005-2010) Fees and donations [3]
1.10 Annual running costs	In past 6 years has averaged around 100k annually [3]. 2011/2012 £60,323 [4]

2. Activities with woodland owners

2.1 How contact is made?	'An awful lot of it now is word of mouth recommendations. Because we have been around so long we've got a lot of people recommending us. But we also have the website, and we do a range of events, so publicity gets out there one way or another' [2]
2.2 How many owners worked with	Over 500 woodland owners, owning on average about 4ha of woodland [3], 53 owners in 2011/2012 [4]
2.3 What coverage does this represent?	600 ha of woodland in 2011/2012 [4]
2.4 What services offered?	'The initial visit is free of charge thanks to the local authorities and the conservation board funding. I have an initial discussion, rather than just discuss what the owners thought of doing, I have a broad discussion about the woodland in more general terms and discuss what the opportunities might be. And after that if they want me to do more work for them, either management plan or felling license, then I do that for them on an hourly basis or an agreed fee basis' [2].
2.5 Business advice offered?	No
2.6 Woodland creation?	'The projects' main aim is to bring small-unmanaged woodlands back into management, that's our core aim but we do give advice on new planting where somebody wants to do that' [2]

3. Activities with other sector constituents

3.1 Work with contractors?	'I tend to do the management plans and felling licenses and the marking of the trees, but after that I get contractors in, or volunteers or the landowners themselves on some occasions to do the work. But that varies from year to year [2]
3.2 Work with processors?	No
3.3 Work to stimulate the market?	No
3.4 Networking?	Yes, by virtue of local knowledge.
3.5 Publications produced	Information sheets including: using mobile sawmills, selling conifers from woodlands, marking broadleaved trees for thinning.

4. Relationships with other stakeholders

4.1 Relationship with private sector	'Chiltern Woodlands Project works in a complementary way with a number of local consultants and contractors. Efforts are made to work in partnership with local businesses and councils wherever possible' [3].
4.2 Relationship with Forestry Commission	[no data]

4.3 Relationship with Local Action Group

Both the project director and the Chairman attended meetings of the Chilterns LEADER Local Action Group (LAG)

LEADER provides support for workshops: 'Unfortunately the leader rules meant that I couldn't end up doing all the bits in the original application. The small print was so great that it stopped it being delivered as planned [2].

LEADER is also able to fund timber assessments in small woods (under 3ha) [4]

4.4 Relationship with other interventions

The project director has just been elected chairman of the Royal Forestry Society Oxon / Bucks division.

The project director also sits on the steering group of Wood Fuel East that covers the Eastern region, including Herts & Beds, with grants to support woodland owners and contractors to invest in harvesting and processing equipment and related infrastructure. John [project director] also attends the Forestry Commission's Applicants Focus Group, which discussed the implementation of the English Woodland Grant Scheme and related subjects; and is a member of the Woodland Initiatives steering group. [4]

5. Reflections on initiative

5.1 Most successful outcome?

'Continuity; that we are there to continue to help people. That there is someone there that they can call up and ask. Not having a short-term view of it. We are hoping to stay and be a charity in the long term. Rather than just be a 3-year project that has targets and then ends when the money runs out' [2].

5.2 What has helped make the project successful?

Its trying to have a flexible approach, but also to stay focused on what we are trying to achieve, and not be too driven by a particular source of funds and the rules that go with it [3]

5.3 Problems encountered?

'One of the problems at the moment is that the whole woodland management process is getting quite rigid. You have to do things in a certain year, and then the weather isn't right, or the contractor isn't available, or the timber price isn't right. It's proving quite difficult. The whole thing needs loosening up and being a little more flexible to actually achieve things more easily' [2]

Uncertainty of funding.

5.4 Securing funding issues

'Securing grant funding for general support of this type of work in the present day is difficult, particularly from Local Authorities with many other competing demands. For this reason, Chiltern Woodlands Project has adapted to a project-funded regime and is now seeking support for its activities along these lines.' [3]

Sources:

1. Chiltern Woodlands Project. 2013 *Initiative website*. Available from: <http://www.chilternsaonb.org/woodlands-project.html>.

2. Morris, J., *Interview with Project Manager*. 2013, Chiltern Woodlands Project.
3. Chiltern Woodlands Project, *Chiltern Woodlands Business Plan*. 2009, Chiltern Woodlands Project.
4. Chiltern Woodlands Project. 2013. *Annual Report 2011/2012*. Chiltern Woodlands Association.

c) Cumbria Woodlands

Cumbria Woodlands has provided advice and support to woodland owners in the Cumbria region for over 20 years. The focus of the most recently funded projects has been the woodfuel supply chain, extending support to contractors and processors.

Cumbria Woodlands offer to owners a three-tiered system of support, starting with a free advisory service (Silver birch). This can be taken on to Oak level service that offers support with grant applications, business ideas and a more detailed assessment of the woodland. This is charged at 10% of commercial rates. The third level of service is for anyone interested in woodfuel advice.

A key part of how the advisory service works in Cumbria is that they have a consortium of 12 agents they use to refer advisory work to. They are able to select among the advisors depending on their strengths and the requirements of the woodland owners.

Key features of initiative:

- Longevity – been operating 22 years
- First initial visit is free. They run a three-tiered advisory service to suit different needs of woodland owners.
- Following the initial visit the woodland management work is given to a pool of private sector contractors.
- They have done lots of work with contractors and processors via the increase in interest in woodfuel markets.

Aims:

'Cumbria Woodlands is dedicated to the productive management of woodland in Cumbria.'

'Cumbria Woodlands is striving to re-integrate these woodlands with the rural economy by stimulating active management that will produce timber, generate jobs and enhance conservation, landscape and recreation value' [1]

Mechanisms:

Stakeholder	Activity	Part of current project?
Woodland owners:	Engagement	Y
	Advice – woodland management	Y
	Advice – Business related	Y
	Grant aid or support with grants applications	Y
	Training	Y
	Direct management of woods	
Contractors and Processors:	New planting	
	Advice – Business related	Y

Buyers of wood products:	Training	Y
	Grant aid or support with grants applications	Y
	Promoting local brands	
	Events (wood fairs etc)	Y
	Networking across the chain	Y

Profile:

1. About the initiative

1.1 Website	http://www.cumbriawoodlands.co.uk/
1.2 Region covered	NW: Cumbria
1.4 Date started	1991
1.5 Origins of intervention	'Cumbria Woodlands was launched in 1991 in response to widespread concern over the neglected state of the County's woodlands. The project brief was originally for five years, but the organisation has moved forward with the constantly changing funding environment.' [1]
1.6 Staff numbers	5
1.7 Formal structure	Unincorporated Society
1.8 Formal relationship to other organisation	Hosted by Cumbria County Council. 'They assist with human resources, cash flow, and accounts' [2]
1.9 Overseen by	'Our Advisory Group is made up of representation from the Friends of the Lake District, Wood Education Programme Trust, Country Land & Business Association, the Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority and the University of Cumbria's National School of Forestry' [2]
1.9 Funding sources	Cumbria County Council European Social Fund (ESF) Forestry Commission Green Ways to Work (regional project funded by ESF) Lake District National Park Authority Natural England Woodland Trust[1]
1.10 Annual running costs	'It's always been a broad partnership, the FC have been the long standing supporter, the County Council have, the Wildlife Trust, United Utilities give us money as well, others come and go'[2]. [info not available]

2. Activities with woodland owners

2.1 How contact is made?	'Going to country shows, going to markets, doing stuff in the press, value of peer to peer referrals, and just being there for a long time' [2].
2.2 How many owners worked with	'Our first advisory visit is free, and with incredibly simple paperwork, so it's really low risk stuff for a landowner' [2] 407 in current RDPE funded project '394 woodland owners have signed up for a free advisory visit and report

58% of clients accessed further specialist advice (Oak Days for grant applications, timber mensuration, woodfuel assessment)' [3]

2.3 What coverage does this represent?

1673 ha of woodland.

116 applications made to the Forestry Commission's English Woodland Grant Scheme (EWGS) resulting in projects with a total value of £397,735 declared to date[3].

2.4 What services offered?

'Three levels of service are offered: an initial free assessment and report (Silver Birch Day), followed by more specialist support under the Oak level service, which can include grant applications and timber mensuration, and a woodfuel and renewable energy assessment, both charged at just 10% of cost'[3].

2.5 Business advice offered?

'One of the other things linked to that is mentoring for businesses, so that's about business skills and applying for other grant aid for businesses' [2]

2.6 Woodland creation?

'We are not funded to do that at the moment' [2]

3. Activities with other sector constituents

3.1 Work with contractors?

'We work with firewood contractors - We've also run the woodfuel school in last 18 months, again RDPE funding and a small amount from elsewhere. And it's trying to improve quality within the firewood world. We've done something about health and safety and try to move people towards Hetas certification' [2]

3.2 Work with processors?

Wood chip processors

3.3 Work to stimulate the market?

'If we can increase their knowledge, about drying wood in particular, then that's a good thing' [2]

3.4 Networking?

Project's website has directory

3.5 Publications produced

'Warmth from Woods' - booklet providing information to help people make informed choices about burning wood
'Cumbrian Sawmilling directory' - to connect buyers of timber and (sawmilling services) with Cumbrian saw-millers and timber merchants who stock predominantly locally sourced timber.

4. Relationships with other stakeholders

4.1 Relationship with private sector

After initial advisory visit the link is made with a contractor who contacts the owner to take forward the work.
'It's a very delicate line that we tread, the majority of the money goes straight back into the private sector' [2]

4.2 Relationship with FC

'We work very well in tandem with them. They often get called and they refer them to us, and then in turn and in time it should go back to an FC application for grant aid' [2]

4.3 Relationship with Local Action Group

Two key staff have taken the role of chair in the local LEADER groups. (Cumbrian Fells and Dales and Solway Border and Eden LEADER groups)

4.4 Relationship with other interventions?

Staff participate in several national networks. (EWTP)

National conferences, Mersey forest, Lancashire woodland project, Yorwoods, Northwoods, Silvanus trust, some of the Scottish ones

5. Reflections on initiative

5.1 Most successful outcome?

'It's when we get an individual or a company and they access different areas of support from us, they may get advice they may get some business steerage, they may just get inspired by us, and it's the mix of those that makes me smile.' [2]

5.2 What has helped make the project successful?

'You've got to be pretty flexible to find the funding opportunities; you've got to persevere to get the cash. Having good partners helps
'We've been quite good at following things nationally and that gives some advantage when getting funds locally, that's made a huge difference'
'Our first advisory visit is free, and with incredibly simple paperwork, so it's really low risk stuff for a landowner, and of the other vital elements of marketing is wood fuel, because wood fuel is in essence talking about the economic element of woodland management.'
'Well owners do have so many motivations for doing things, you really do have to chime with that. If you don't chime with what they want, then you aren't going to draw them in aren't you.'[2]

5.3 Problems encountered?

'A lot of it's about money. And the ebbs and flows of money. Current RDPE is all based on cost recovery, and there's all sorts of things that are ineligible so you always lose on these projects.'

5.4 Securing funding issues

'We helped I'm guessing 5 or 6 mobile sawmills start up, I don't think any of those have become full time jobs for an individual. Some of that's about a cultural shift, but some of that's about end markets. It's very tricky.'[2]

'It takes a lot of time, two of us do it as part of our jobs.'

'We spent years sitting on national and local committees before we got this current round of funding. Three application processes to get the money and you can't fund that stuff but without it you can't run a project.'[2]

Example of initiative in action:

In XXX Woodlands a profitable firewood business has been created from woodlands that were unmanaged in 2005. Three jobs have been created since 2005 and currently firewood production is over 1000 tonnes pa. The price of the Estate's firewood has tripled in five years and now 400 customers are supplied.

The owner of one woodland explained: "That was when a marketing adviser from Cumbria Woodlands paid a visit. She convinced us that we could make much more out of our woodlands, get more of them back into sustainable management and exploit the expanding market for woodfuel. Without that initial assessment we would have been much slower to recognise the opportunity. It proved to be a crucial and timely contact."

Cumbria Woodlands helped this owner secure a LEADER grant of £8 000 to purchase a POSCH firewood processor, which uses sensitively coppiced Estate hardwood such as oak, ash and hazel. They also increased the price of their finished product to a more economic and profitable level.

"Help in getting grants to buy machines has been massively helpful, but just as important has been the emotional and intellectual support from Cumbria Woodlands. They understand the business and provided a constant source of advice and support. When I was uncertain about some thing, they could help and importantly also reassured me when we were on the right track and doing things well."

Sources:

1. Cumbria Woodlands. *Initiative website*. 2013 21.02.03]; Available from: <http://www.cumbriawoodlands.co.uk/>.
2. Elstone, N., *Interview*. 2013, Cumbria Woodlands.
3. Cumbria Woodlands, *Witherslack case study*. 2012, Cumbria Woodlands.

d) Heartwoods

Heartwoods is a West Midlands regional initiative managed by Small Woods a not-for-profit organisation with over 2000 members supporting the Woodland and Forest Industries. The Heartwoods project was set up to help all aspects of the woodfuel supply chain in the West Midlands.

Key features of the initiative:

- Focus of project is primarily woodfuel

- Successful outreach to woodland owners through survey of National Farmers Union (NFU) members
- Referral scheme to private sector contractors (woodfuel champions) following free initial advisory visit

Aims:

The project's objectives have been to:

1. Improve the woodfuel supply chain
2. Increase the area of managed woodlands
3. Support businesses and employment in the woodfuel sector
4. Help to achieve carbon savings.

Mechanisms:

Stakeholder	Activity	Part of current project?
Woodland owners:	Engagement	Y
	Advice – woodland management	Y (private sector referrals)
	Advice – Business related	Y
	Grant aid or support with grants applications	Y
	Training	Y
	Direct management of woods	
	New planting	
Contractors and Processors:	Advice – Business related	Y
	Training	Y
	Grant aid or support with grants applications	Y
Buyers of wood products:	Promoting local brands	
	Events (wood fairs etc)	Y
	Networking across the chain	Y

Profile:

1. About the initiative

1.2 Website <http://heartwoods.co.uk/>

1.3 Region covered West Midlands

1.4 Date started We are about the 4th programme in the West Midlands region. It goes back to the early mid 1990s.

1.5 Origins of intervention 'Heartwoods was set up to help all aspects of the woodfuel supply chain in the west midlands' [1].
'It started with the Marches Woodland Initiative, and I think we are about the 4th programme in the West Midlands region' [2]

1.6 Staff numbers 4

1.7 Formal structure	None
1.8 Formal relationship to other organisation	It is a project of the Small Woods Association, which is a charity.
1.9 Overseen by	Steering group – Forestry Commission, Small Woods, Woodland Trust, Rural Hubs West Midlands, ConFor, Natural England, Defra, Midlands Wood Fuel, West Midlands Leaders board. 'The steering group meets 3-4 times a year to monitor the progress of the initiative and set its strategic objectives' [1]. RDPE through Advantage West Midlands (the RDA for West Midlands)
1.9 Funding sources	
1.10 Annual running costs	Around £100k a year based on the following: 'The cost of the project is going to come in to somewhere between £650 000 including private match funding raised from the programme. But it's very difficult to break down because a big proportion of that is to do a referral scheme to pay consultants where people go on to do added value activity. We offer a subsidised rate on that and I think we're spending about £175 000 on that so it's not straightforward really' [2]
2. Activities with woodland owners	
2.1 How contact is made?	Survey of National Farmers Union (NFU) members to gauge interest in woodfuel potential. 7000 surveys sent out, 1000 returned. 'And we've also gone to the lengths of cold calling, running our own events, using other events to attract new people and offer our services to them. We've even been known to turn up at livestock shows; I'm not saying that's been the best, but its sort of a marketing mix' [2]
2.2 How many owners worked with	'It [the NFU survey] culminated in about 150 advisory visits and the rest were sort of things we could answer over the phone'[2] 'We've got around 700 beneficiaries, perhaps more actually but they could be contractors, timber businesses, firewood business as well as woodland owners' [2]. 'I'd say 80/90% are new people' [i.e. previously unmanaged woodlands]
2.3 What coverage does this represent?	'We've got on our records through superficial checks that we've advised on over 6000 ha of woodland' [2] By time of mid project review in 2010, advisory visits had been made to 2386ha [3].
2.4 What services offered?	'We do initial advisory visits and if there's any scope in there to do anything we've got a programme funded under measure 114 where we pass them over to a panel of consultants that are on a recruitment panel who tendered for the work and they get subsidized by somewhere between 60-80%' [2]. 'Events are wide ranging from Woodland Walks to specific events such as assessing timber for added value markets' [4].
2.5 Business advice offered?	'We've assisted with a lot of business plans as part of grant applications' [2] 'We did end up running a business management course, which was massively undersubscribed so we didn't end up running it' [2]
2.6 Woodland creation?	No

3. Activities with other sector constituents

- 3.1 Work with contractors?** 'We wrote development plan reports for businesses including existing and start up firewood merchants, timber processors or contractors who harvest timber' [2]
- 3.2 Work with processors?** 'The closest we've got to business management course is the Ignite course – which includes looking at how they run their processors efficiently. But as for courses on how to run your accounts and that sort of thing, we have had very little interest in that' [2].
- 3.3 Work to stimulate the market?** 'When we reviewed it as part of the steering group, it was clear that the most impact we could have really given that we have played a very active role with the grants was to try to stimulate the industry. That's where these woodland advisory visits have come in. that's been our number one priority to try and advise the woodlands to get more timber into the supply chain' [2].
- 3.4 Networking?** Online directory on website with 269 listings under 40 categories. 'The directory was refreshed about 6 months ago. People do use it'[2]
'My predecessor also ran a virtual timber yard, so when people had a lot of timber they could market it there, but that effectively ran out of steam because not that many people were using it' [2]
- 3.5 Publications produced** Email newsletter

4. Relationships with other stakeholders

- 4.1 Relationship with private sector** 'We'd have a massive amount of conflict with the private sector if we didn't run that referral scheme to be honest. I think some consultants who didn't get in on the tender panel thought that's not fair, we are going in and offering free initial advice but what I would say is that the people that we've picked up are generally the people that the woodland management companies aren't interested in' [2].
- 4.2 Relationship with Forestry Commission** 'Very good, they sit on our steering group. They have supported us to do some programmes that sit outside the RDPE boundary. We generally try and do everything that the FC asks us to do. We've had a great relationship and they really look after us and they are helping us develop something in the woodland enterprise zone. I can only speak very highly of them' [2]
- 4.3 Relationship with Local Action Group** 'We have been involved in several Leader groups. North Staffordshire, Shropshire AONB and the Wye valley. But to be honest our programme cut across their areas. We had a regional programme to deliver and we asked if there was anything we could help them deliver say if they were running a micro grant for small scale forestry equipment we would promote that for them. But we haven't approached them for funding or anything because we've had our own funding'[2].
- 4.4 Relationship with other interventions** 'We did at the start during the first two years we had a group where we went and shared ideas and I thought that had great value at the start because we found out what was working and what wasn't working. As the programmes go on there is less of a requirement for it' [2]

5. Reflections on initiative

- 5.1 Most successful outcome?** 'When I asked the staff that I think the most useful piece of work we do is actually the hand holding, the free initial advisory visit and the targeting we've done. Because if you don't do either of them you are not

5.2 What has helped make the project successful?

going to engage these woodland owners who generally keep their head below the radar' [2].

'Having good partnership relations is paramount, having the right people on the steering group (NFU CLA, ConFor etc). The fact that we have the Small Woods Organisation with all its members in-house is obviously a big coup for us, but also working with Natural England and persuading them to give you lists of people who have HLS agreements with forestry options and having them on the steering group. I think that's critical. I think we'd have really struggled if we'd relied on just cold calling people' [2].

'But also its one thing having foresters as staff but it helps if you've got people with different skillsets personalities and characters that are not necessarily foresters. If I've got someone doing cold calling or ringing people on the phone, you could have the best forester in the world but if they are not comfortable in marketing services and engaging people and trying to talk them into a visit you aren't going to get anywhere' [2].

5.3 Problems encountered?

'A difficult element of the programme has been the target to support 48 woodland owners each year. This has driven our programme in one respect to continually engage woodland owners as we have found statistically for every three woodland owners visited this generated one lead for a subsidised advisory visit by a consultant. There has also been difficulty in this part of the programme ensuring that consultants followed up with woodland owners as per contract requirements and submitted claims on time' [2].

'Other risks to manage as part of the programme have been trying to keep staffing going when you move into the final year of the project when there's no job security. There's going to be a gap for two years before the new programme. We've been trying to engage with the LEPs but they are not fully formed. It's quite daunting for staff at this point everyone's looking for new jobs' [2].

5.4 Securing funding issues

'Funding at the moment is an absolute disaster. According to Small Woods Association CEO once upon a time she was successful with one in three applications now its one in thirteen just because funding is much more difficult to attain [2]

Example of initiative in action:

Three enterprising 'woodsmen' in Herefordshire have turned an area of neglected woodland into both a thriving business opportunity and a haven for wildlife.

This venture has seen the woodland owner work in close collaboration with two local wood contractors. Heartwoods were able to help the three of them tap into Rural Development Programme funding through Herefordshire County Council and they were awarded Woodland Enterprise Grants after submitting viable business cases.

One woodland owner has now successfully applied for a £6 000 grant toward investing in a multi-purpose timber-handling machine. With the aim of working in collaboration another individual secured nearly £6 000 grant-funding towards a firewood processor which also extracts sawdust for sale to the farming community. The third team member secured £13 000 grant-funding for a mobile sawmill.

In his first year, the woodland owner built a drying store in the wood and produced nearly 300 tonnes of quality roundwood, as well as cleaning undergrowth and opening water courses.

"By working and bidding for the grants together we have been able to acquire vital equipment which, individually, would have been beyond any one of us working alone," said the wood processor.

Under a five-year Forestry Commission approved management plan, the first two seasons' work have paid their way. Within the woods, 25 m³ (12.5 tonnes) of high quality sawn oak, about 100 tonnes of sawn logs, and some 300 m³ (150 tonnes) of bagged palletised firewood have been produced. Until the woods are in proper long-term management they expect to continue production over the coming years. [5]

Sources:

1. Heartwoods. Initiative website. 2013 12.3.13]; Available from: <http://heartwoods.co.uk/>.
2. Maskery, N., Interview. 2013, Heartwoods.
3. Resources for Change, Heartwoods Project Review. 2010, Resources for Change.
4. Small Woods. Initiative Website. 2013; Available from: <http://smallwoods.org.uk/>.
5. Heartwoods, Dorman Case Study. 2013, Heartwoods.

e)Mersey Forest

The Mersey Forest is the largest of England's 12 Community Forests

(www.communityforests.org.uk), covering 465 square miles. It was launched in 1994 as the Community Forest for Merseyside and North Cheshire, and is a partnership between seven local authorities, landowners, the Forestry Commission, Natural England and businesses including United Utilities.[1] The other Community forests do offer advisory services for woodland owners to varying degrees, but they do not have such an active programme of stimulating market 'pull'

Key features of the initiative:

- Large organisation with 15 staff members
- Dedicated post focused on stimulating market 'pull' for wood products since 2005.
- The wood allotments idea links woodland owners who want their woodland managed with volunteers who work in return for wood for personal wood fuel use.
- An online RHI calculator has been developed for public use to ascertain economic viability of installing a biomass boiler.
- Offering training to Heat engineers has proved a successful route to increasing interest in biomass boilers.

Aims:

The Mersey forest vision is to deliver "More from Trees" – 'with partners, communities and landowners transforming their landscape and revitalising a woodland culture in and around our towns and cities. Woodland will cover 20% of the area thanks to the planting of new woods and individual trees, complementing other habitats. Woodlands will be managed so that they achieve their potential. And all of us will prosper thanks to the economic and social benefits of environmental regeneration.' [2]

- Policy 3. Advising and Supporting Landowners
We will work with public and private landowners in rural and urban areas to encourage, advise, and support them to plant and manage trees, woodlands, and associated habitats on their land.
- Policy 12. Woodfuel, Timber and Forest Industries
We will design and manage woodlands, wherever possible, to produce woodfuel and high quality timber. Local production and consumption of traditional and innovative products

will be encouraged through marketing, promotion, advice and support. This will support the transition to a low carbon economy and local jobs.

Mechanisms:

Stakeholder	Activity	Part of current project?
Woodland owners:	Engagement	Y
	Advice –woodland management	Y
	Advice –Business related	Y
	Grant aid or support with grants applications	Y
	Training	Y
	Direct management of woods	Y
	New planting	Y
Contractors and Processors:	Advice –Business related	Y
	Training	Y
	Grant aid or support with grants applications	Y
Buyers of wood products:	Promoting local brands	Y
	Events (wood fairs etc)	Y
	Networking across the chain	Y

Profile:

1. About the initiative	
1.2 Website	http://www.merseyforest.org.uk/
1.3 Region covered	Merseyside and North Cheshire
1.4 Date started	1994. Post created 7 years ago to stimulate markets for timber and woodfuel.
1.5 Origins of intervention	'The Community Forest programme was established in 1990 by the then Countryside Commission as a pilot project to demonstrate the potential contribution of environmental improvement to economic and social regeneration. The three initial pilots quickly grew to a national programme, which made use of broad-based partnerships to pioneer activity and deliver lasting change.' [3]
1.6 Staff numbers	15
1.7 Formal structure	None. 'It's a brand and it's a partnership' [4]
1.8 Formal relationship to other organisation	Cheshire West and Cheshire Council are the host organization. Some staff within Mersey forest are employed by the Community Forest Trust, which is a charity.
1.9 Overseen by	Mersey Forest is a partnership of seven local authorities (Cheshire West and Chester, Halton, Knowsley, Liverpool, Sefton, St.Helens and Warrington), landowners, the Forestry Commission, Natural England, businesses including United Utilities, and most importantly: local communities [5].
1.9 Funding sources	RDPE Local authorities EU Objective One funding (2000-2006) Private sector funding (e.g. United Utilities)

1.10 Annual running costs [data not available]

2. Activities with woodland owners

2.1 How contact is made? 'There's a lot of outreach work going on. Over the last 20 years we have built up a large list of owners, and periodically we do a mail shot to this list. We also do the standard things like county shows etc' [4].

Most recent mail shot went out to around 800 woodland owners on the database.

2.2 How many owners worked with 2009/2010 - 60
2010/2011 - 82
2011/2012 - 68

'There's a lot of repeat business [4].

2.3 What coverage does this represent? [data not available]

2.4 What services offered? 'It's a free impartial visit. In certain areas if there are funds available particularly RDPE we will use that to cover it. We can spend more time if there's additional funding' [4]

2.5 Business advice offered? Advice on installing biomass boilers.

2.6 Woodland creation? This is a key part of the Mersey forest mandate.

3. Activities with other sector constituents

3.1 Work with contractors? 'We've had various successful programmes. Several years ago we were issuing grants under EU objective 1 we ran a grant scheme of several million pounds. We'd go out, assess the business, if they wanted a piece of machinery and that would generate more employment or turnover' [4]

3.2 Work with processors? 'With the programme that we ran in Mersey forest previously we've got a very good understanding of the contractor base here. We can't offer the grants that we did before but we will still offer advice where we can' [4].

3.3 Work to stimulate the market? **Transfer training**
We've identified areas that are off the gas grid, we've mapped that, We've created rural heat density maps, targeted the businesses in those areas and made them aware of RHI and also we've identified the oil heat engineers in those areas. Those are the people who would normally be providing the heat for the off grid premises. We've contacted all of them and through the RDPE we've offered them training transfer course, which runs through HETAS which takes them from Oil-fired heating and also qualifies them for biomass heating. We are giving them a better offer to their clients. They can now offer them biomass system if its better for the client [4].

Wood allotments

'One of the things we've set up is Wood allotments. We've got a lot of places where the planting is about 20 years old and needs its first thinning. We've piloted this for 2 years. We find a suitable site. We will work with the owner to mark the site up, give them the training. We get what we call allotmenters to come in, they sign an agreement and they pay money over, which is quite interesting, and then they've got the

rights to cut the marked trees for that year[4]’

3.4 Networking? ‘Take a bough – we hosted and curated a designers exhibition show. Local craftsmen were asked to create objects from local wood. That helped to put the local crafts people in contact with the local suppliers of semi-processed material’ [4].

3.5 Publications produced

4. Relationships with other stakeholders

4.1 Relationship with private sector ‘We’ve got a very good understanding of the contractor base here. we know the players that are willing to expand and move into new areas’ [4].

4.2 Relationship with Forestry Commission ‘Very good excellent, couldn’t be a better bunch’ [4].

4.3 Relationship with Local Action Group Mersey local LEADER supported one-to-one advice for woodland owners, training and assistance with management planning. Cheshire rural biomass (CheRuB) supports the installation of woodfuel heating systems and the training of both operators of woodfuel systems, and existing heating engineers in modern woodfuel systems.

4.4 Relationship with other interventions ‘We’ve established the Community Forest Trust and it incorporates a couple of other community forests’. (Mersey forest, Red rose forest, Pennine edge forest, and forest of Mercia) [4].

5. Reflections on initiative

5.1 Most successful outcome? One of the things that has got the most potential is the wood allotments. We are rolling it out next year across the Mersey forest and we hope to go national with that as well. It’s a matchmaking thing [4].

5.2 What has helped make the project successful? Training the heating engineers has been an incredibly smart way to roll out woodfuel. Because they are doing the job for you. They know the customers, so rather than traditionally doing the work [4].

5.3 Problems encountered? If we could get the forest sector to look out the forest gate more, that would be really helpful. The forestry sector has been concentrating on trying to make the intervention within the wood, whereas maybe making the intervention with the businesses, the processors, they know there’s a demand out there’ [4]

5.4 Securing funding issues It’s always problematic. We have a full time fundraiser at the Mersey forest [4].

Example of initiative in action:

Mersey forest identified a gap in the market that the Rural Heat Initiative grants would not cover and generated funding for a local grant scheme (CheRuB) to fill this gap.

1. Where there are people running or wanting mini district heat schemes.
2. In areas where there may be intermittent use of the boiler it may be better to take the funding the Mersey forest is offering rather than claim RHI.

[Source of CheRuB is RDPE) [4]

'Take a Bough' showcases artists from the Northwest using timber grown in The Mersey Forest and demonstrates the sustainability, versatility and beauty of our trees and woodlands. (http://www.merseyforest.org.uk/partner_reports/reporttakeabough.asp)

Sources:

1. Regeneris Consulting, The Economic Contribution of the Mersey Forest's Objective One-funded Investments. 2009, Regeneris Consulting Ltd Cheshire.
2. Mersey Forest, The Mersey Forest Plan consultation draft 2013. 2013, The Mersey Forest.
3. Pollard, A. 2012. Info on Community forests. Woodlands Initiative Network.
4. Blandford, N. 2013. Interview with Timber and Bioenergy post holder. Mersey Forest.
5. The Mersey Forest. 2013. Initiative website. Available from: <http://www.merseyforest.org.uk/>.

f) Northwoods

Northwoods, and its Yorkshire counterpart Yorwoods, are initiatives working under the umbrella organization; Rural Development Initiatives Ltd. (RDI) The two projects have similar aims, operate in contiguous areas, share office space, but have separate project funding so have engaged in different projects.

Key features of initiative:

- Active across the woodfuel supply chain
- IGNITE training course offered through RDI has been hosted by other initiatives across the country
- Training for the forestry and rural sector via the RDPE Training Framework

Aims:

'Northwoods exists to support the tree and timber businesses of North East England. We provide training, advice, information and support to all those working in the woods or with the products that come from them.' [1]

Mechanisms:

Stakeholder	Activity	Part of current project?
Woodland owners:	Engagement	Y
	Advice –woodland management	Y
	Advice –Business related	Y
	Grant aid or support with grants applications	Y

Contractors and Processors:	Training	Y
	Direct management of woods	
	New planting	Y
	Advice –Business related	Y
Buyers of wood products:	Training	Y
	Grant aid or support with grants applications	Y
	Promoting local brands	Y
	Events (wood fairs etc)	Y
	Networking across the chain	Y

Profile:

1. About the initiative

1.2 Website	http://www.northwoods.org.uk/
1.3 Region covered	North East Region
1.4 Date started	1998
1.5 Origins of initiative	'Northwoods was initially a project set up under the Forestry Contacting Association (FCA) using MAFF Objective 5b funding ¹ . The two projects were going ahead and being very successful and the steering group didn't want to see it stop. RDI set itself up to take the whole thing forward'[2]
1.6 Staff numbers	1 Project Manager, 1 Project Officer, with additional administration and financial support coming from RDI
1.7 Formal structure	Unincorporated Association
1.8 Formal relationship to other organisation	Managed by Rural Development Initiatives Ltd, a not-for-profit company limited by guarantee. 'It all goes through RDI because of that it means we are not restricted in our activities, unlike being attached to a local authority' [2]
1.9 Overseen by	Strategic guidance is provided by a Steering Group. Activities are reported to a steering group 3 to 4 times a year to ensure strategic continuity with the initiatives aims and objectives. 'Northwoods takes its direction from the partnership which forms a steering group. The steering group meets on a roughly quarterly basis, and is composed of organisations with strong links to the sector. It also includes the Forestry Commission, Northumberland County Council, Northumberland National Park, CONFOR[1]
1.9 Funding sources	'In the past we've worked with organisations such as the RDA Defra and also FC' [2] BioENERgy northeast is the channel for RDPE funding in the Northeast supporting the emerging woodfuel market.
1.10 Annual running costs	'This can vary depending on the level of project activity being run at anyone time, but current 2013/14 budget is in the region of £80k' [2].

2. Activities with woodland owners

¹ A European funding stream in late 1980's.

2.1 How contact is made?	Events, training projects. Project database - 'we've gained that over the long period of time we've been operating'
2.2 How many owners worked with	600 on database – includes owners and contractors. 'It's very difficult to say how many are owners. One chap may be an agent for 20/30 owners. More than 50% I'd say.' [2]
2.3 What coverage does this represent?	[data not available]
2.4 What services offered?	Northwoods is able to offer a range of services including business support, training and woodland management and creation and general advice. Northwoods offer a series of training courses on the production and supply of woodfuel. The award-winning 3-day IGNITE series includes: Woodfuel Production and Supply intensive course that provides a customised award from Lantra Awards.
2.5 Business advice offered?	'That's one thing that we do with the bioenergy project for businesses hoping to diversify. We can investigate the markets, help them draw business funds and look to funding.' [2]
2.6 Woodland creation?	Northwoods ran consultation events for the Forestry Commission's Woodland Potential Calculator, which looks at woodland creation from more of a landscape scale.
3. Activities with other sector constituents	
3.1 Work with contractors?	Yes. 'We work with contractors to develop their business to take advantage of increase in woodfuel market as well as looking at developing the products they already produce for example working with firewood suppliers to become quality assured as well as looking at sustainability of the products that they produce..' [1, 2]
3.2 Work with processors?	Work with processors to become Woodsure plus – quality assurance for firewood and woodfuel in general
3.3 Work to stimulate the market?	'It's a mixture of work with the woodland owner and the contractors, the business development side of things. We operate across the full wood supply chain' [2].
3.4 Networking?	Firewood fair more a firewood auction 900 people 'We brought together a number of firewood merchants from within the region and the general public. To give customers the option to buy firewood directly from a supplier, rather than from the large chains. It also helped in educating the general public in what they need to be looking at when buying woodfuel.' [2] 'We run regular supply chain networking events across the region especially where there is a specific opportunity or project to promote. These usually take the form of a 2 hours, after work information event/discussion/presentation held in a central location with refreshments on offer to help attract busy working people' [2].
3.5 Publications produced	Firewood suppliers map on website Northwoods news (regular e-newsletter) 14 publications relating to biomass since 2003

4. Relationships with other stakeholders

- 4.1 Relationship with private sector** "Very good. Well we have a lot of people within the sector who know who we are, what we do, and even if we've not got any financial support at that time we always keep in contact and pass on details.' [2]
- 4.2 Relationship with Forestry Commission** 'Very good as well. They chair the steering groups, we have regular meetings with them.' [2]
- 4.3 Relationship with Local Action Group** 'We've worked with Defra to develop the Bioenergy project which provides funding support for emerging woodfuel markets: Woodfuel owners hoping to install a woodfuel boiler system, or contractors wanting to develop their business further' [2]
LAG we've been involved with leader we've just completed two projects with leader Northumberland and North Pennines we went to leader to say this is a project idea we've got, is it something you'd be interested to fund. And then we took that forward.[2]
- 4.4 Relationship with other interventions** We speak to Cumbria, Lancashire, East midlands, well all of them really. My colleague attends Woodland Initiative Network events, we look for synergies with others. [2]

5. Reflections on initiative

- 5.1 Most successful outcome?** 'It's the hand holding side where our expertise is. Making time for people who don't have time to write their own business plans or applications, or they don't understand how to fill in a felling licenses application. It's being able to speak to the private and the public sector. We try and help them through that process by trying to understand what they are wanting.' [2]
- 5.2 What has helped make the project successful?** Networking: 'We speak to a lot of people and this makes for good networking. It's that sort of local knowledge base of whose doing what where, what the potential market is and from a woodland owner's point of view who would be the best person to use on that site. Some people have different machines, which are more suitable for certain sites.' [2]
- 5.3 Problems encountered?** 'We've had to change quite dramatically recently in the way that we operate' [2]
'Funding programmes are always time limited and we need to be able to react quickly to changes in funding patterns. Through RDI and the Steering Group, Northwoods is able to react quickly to changing circumstances' [2].
- 5.4 Securing funding issues** 'There's always going to be a need of some financial support. Because we don't specifically work on just one thing, we are not consultants or agents in the truest sense (we tend to signpost woodland owners to these as and when appropriate), we do other things such as business development and training and so on you'd end up specifying on one element and everything else gets dropped. We can take a more whole sector approach.' [2]

Example of initiative in action:

'A rural businessman was successful in securing grant intervention through the first round of the RDPE bioENERgy support programme along with four other rural businesses.

The aim of his application was to expand and develop both the forestry contracting and firewood supply elements of his business, through the purchase of a thinnings harvester, firewood processor and tipping trailer.

This individual already supplies domestic customers with firewood across the local area, from Gilsland to Shotley Bridge, and is hoping to double his firewood production within three years.

The business carries out the majority of forestry contracting work on small and undermanaged woodlands producing a high proportion of low-grade timber. This is ideally suited for firewood and woodchip production, with increased demand as the woodfuel sector expands. The timber harvested is processed to supply a number of woodfuel users from local domestic customers and the local swimming pool to large biomass power stations.'

"I'm delighted that my bid was successful. Our new firewood processor makes the whole process so much quicker and easier – what would have taken three of us a full day using manual chopping techniques can now be done by one of us in just a few hours, so it will make a huge difference to the business. The firewood market is strong and we're now in a better position to be able to meet demand." [1]

Sources:

1. Northwoods. Initiative website. 2013 13.03.13]; Available from: <http://www.northwoods.org.uk/>.
2. Kitching, A., Interview. 2013, Northwoods.

g) Oxfordshire Woodland Project

The Oxfordshire Woodland Project is a service for private woodland owners and community groups in Oxfordshire and offers advice, assistance with grants and woodland management skills training. The project has existed for 22 years, in recent years staffed only by the project manager.

Key features of the initiative:

- Bespoke training offered to woodland owners in small groups
- Guidance, information & advice to custodians of small woodlands
- Ongoing work with community woodland groups
- In-depth local knowledge gained over long time working in one area

Aims:

- Woodland management: act as a professional authority and catalyst of sustainable small woodland management in Oxfordshire
- Societal perspective & understanding: Increase Oxfordshire's awareness of woodland-related issues and foster understanding of the requirement of sustainable woodland management to attain a wide range of woodland benefits
- Woodland benefits: Take an integrated approach towards fostering woodland value while remaining able to focus on separate benefits when necessary
- Project management: Maintain and seek to improve the Oxfordshire Woodland Project and demonstrate its vision and achievements to the Project stakeholders and society at large [1]

Mechanisms:

Stakeholder	Activity	Part of current project?
Woodland owners:	Engagement	Y
	Advice – woodland management	Y
	Advice – Business related	
	Grant aid or support with grants applications	Y
	Training	Y
	Direct management of woods	Y
	New planting	Y
Contractors and Processors:	Advice – Business related	
	Training	Y
	Grant aid or support with grants applications	
Buyers of wood products:	Promoting local brands	
	Events (wood fairs etc)	
	Networking across the chain	Y

Profile:

1. About the initiative

1.2 Website	http://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/cms/public-site/woodland-project
1.3 Region covered	Oxfordshire County
1.4 Date started	1991
1.5 Origins of intervention	A woodland group started in the 1980's. This became the Oxfordshire Woodland Group that later became a charity, the Oxfordshire Woodland Project.
1.6 Staff numbers	1
1.7 Formal structure	Oxfordshire Woodland Group is a charity
1.8 Formal relationship to other organisation	Oxfordshire Local Authority hosts website Originator of the Wychwood Project
1.9 Overseen by	Steering Group with input from: 7 trustees of Oxfordshire Woodland Group
1.9 Funding sources	Oxfordshire Woodland Group Oxfordshire County Council, West Oxfordshire District Council, South Oxfordshire District Council, and Cherwell District Council 'Topped up by national charitable foundations'
1.10 Annual running costs	£45k

2. Activities with woodland owners

2.1 How contact is made?	'When I was taken on, the project was in transition from set-up mode to mature mode. A lot of the outreach had already been done and my work was cut out servicing the demand' [2]
---------------------------------	--

2.2 How many owners worked with 560 site files accumulated over 20 years. In regular contact with around 20/30 owners per annum.

2.3 What coverage does this represent? *[no data]*

2.4 What services offered? Training sessions include: wood as fuel, splitting wood for fencing, coppicing, selection of trees for thinning, chainsaw use, pruning, planning a new woodland.

2.5 Business advice offered? [on giving support to grant applications] 'I've got drawn into this because I was finding that unless I really engaged and gave them the capacity to move forward things weren't going to happen' [2]

No.
On occasion has worked closely with businesses, notably firewood start-ups and developments. Most recent is Oxford Charcoal. [2]

2.6 Woodland creation? Yes, particularly working with community groups.

3. Activities with other sector constituents

3.1 Work with contractors? Not to date but identified as a new area of activity for the project.

3.2 Work with processors? As above

3.3 Work to stimulate the market? Networking and collaborating with allied initiatives to promote woodfuel.

3.4 Networking? 'I've been able to say, "The person in your area of most relevance to you is this guy", so I can act as an introduction agency and I can do that by virtue of my understanding of the county and my address list' [2]

3.5 Publications produced Newsletter twice a year
17 Information leaflets including: selling trees in small woods, thinning in small woods, mobile bandsaws

4. Relationships with other stakeholders

4.1 Relationship with private sector 'I don't involve myself with anything that is obviously profitable, or I haven't in the past and the reason for that is that the private sector can quite easily do that. I've focused on the unprofitable smaller woodlands' [2]

4.2 Relationship with Forestry Commission 'The FC limits itself because it is a Government agency so it's great to have the stability of information coming from the FC but also from the Sylva Foundation' [2].

4.3 Relationship with Local Action Group *[no data]*

4.4 Relationship with other interventions Chiltern Woodlands Project.
Sylva Foundation . 'I trialled [the myforest website] in 2006. I was the first person to do a management plan on that template. That was an instance of the project working at its best' [2].

5. Reflections on initiative

5.1 Most successful outcome?	'The training angle is something I think the project has done very well in the past; we are able to combine the practical and the human with the technical. Because we are operating locally and we don't have to have Lantra ² standards we can say 'what really interests you' and I will skew the day according to what my group needs. It's a question of bespoke training' [2]
5.2 What has helped make the project successful?	'We've operated flexibly to provide solutions whatever those solutions might be which need not be coloured by the need to make a profit' [2].
5.3 Problems encountered?	'There's been a decline in take-up for the training events because I am having to charge a market rate' [2] 'The new requirement to replace lost public income is now playing out within the Project. It is tremendously disruptive but not entirely without benefits ...new income relationships with processor(s) may yet prove useful. But chasing income does not sit well with promoting the softer benefits.' [2]
5.4 Securing funding issues	[Talking of proportion of time on funding and reporting] 'The whole thing is skewed by having to survive. Recently it's been about 50/50.' [2].

Example of initiative in action:

Two local farmers 'have transformed 70 acres of arable and pig farm into a diversified cluster of farm businesses. Over several decades the land was transferred into woodland with areas set aside for ponds and wildflower meadow. As time goes by the woodland is improving and is starting its long productive cycle. Coppice, specialist tree fruit production, timber and firewood are all featured. The Woodland Project has been a sounding board for much of this forestry activity, helping to develop the quality of the woodland as it matures.

Economic benefits:

The joinery business has stimulated an even greater awareness of the importance of producing knot-free timber. Although it currently uses mainly bought-in timber, it is hoped that in the long term it will be able to use timber from the farm's woodland. In fact some small dimension timber has already been used from fast-growing wild cherry, alder and larch. A small sawmill is available to mill timber up to 18" diameter and 9' long.

The hazel coppice planted in 2000 is still in the process of being developed to full rotation stage and although it has suffered some serious deer browsing, it is producing about £2000 in income per annum from pea sticks, bean-poles and hedging stakes resulting in a break-even situation. The hazel nut plat is also producing around £3000 from nut and oil sales at farm shops and farmers markets.

All these are objectives that have been discussed and developed with the help and advice of the Oxfordshire Woodland Group who have always been a source of inspiration and guidance' [3].

Sources:

1. Rees, D., *Action Plan 2008*, in *Oxfordshire Woodland Project Strategic Goals 2008*: Oxfordshire Woodland Project.
2. Rees, D., *Interview 2013*, Oxfordshire Woodland Project.

² Lantra is the main delivery body for training in the lased-based industries through RDPE

3. Oxfordshire Woodland Project, *Heath Farm case study leaflet*. 2012, Oxfordshire Woodland Project.

h) Ward Forester

The Ward Forester project connects owners who are interested in having their woodlands managed, with consultants ('Ward Foresters') who are willing to take on a group of clients and offer their services at a group rate making use of the economies of scale that the situation presents.

Key features of the initiative:

- The scheme is attractive to woodland owners as it requires very little input from them.
- The project has specialized, by focusing solely on the brokerage role
- Once the connection is made it is in the hands of the Ward Foresters to steer the process, assist owners with management plans and move towards harvesting.
- The brand of 'Ward Forester' engenders trust among the participants.

Aims:

The Ward Forester project aims to engage with, and encourage, woodland owners to actively and sustainably manage their woodlands through the grouping of woodland into 'Wards'.^[1]

The Project's Interim Report of October 2010 stated the scheme objectives as:

- To bring woodlands into management and increase woodland biodiversity.
- To facilitate successful grant applications to EWGS, RDPE Axis 1 and Local Action and other sub-regional initiatives, including working with partners facilitating capital grants for woodfuel installations
- To 'upskill' the sector
- To diversify the land based sector and increase the contribution that the forestry and farm woodlands make to the local economy
- To stimulate new woodfuel markets
- To create new jobs and establish financially viable woodfuel supply chains

Mechanisms:

Stakeholder	Activity	Part of current project?
Woodland owners:	Engagement	Y
	Advice –woodland management	Y – through the Ward Forester
	Advice –business related	
	Grant aid or support with grants applications	
	Training	
	Direct management of woods	Y – through the Ward Forester
Contractors and Processors:	New planting	
	Advice –business related	
	Training	
Buyers of wood products:	Grant aid or support with grants applications	
	Promoting local brands	Y
	Events (wood fairs etc)	
	Networking across the chain	Y

Profile:

1. About the initiative

1.2 Website	www.wardforester.co.uk
1.3 Region covered	Three pilot areas in Devon: Teign, Tamar and Torridge
1.4 Date started	2009
1.5 Origins of intervention	The project arose from the experiences of individuals involved in the South West Forest project that ran for 10 years from 2002 [3]
1.6 Staff numbers	3 part time =1 fte
1.7 Formal structure	None
1.8 Formal relationship to other organisation	All staff members employed by Devon County Council
1.9 Overseen by	Advisory group consists of project staff, a private Ward Forester and management personnel from Devon County Council and Forestry Commission. [1]
1.9 Funding sources	Devon County Council and Forestry Commission
1.10 Annual running costs	£150 000 over 3 years

2. Activities with woodland owners

2.1 How contact is made?	'One of main successes was the reach, seminars, training events, launch events at key areas of county. Mail shots. It was aimed at woodland owners who hadn't engaged with management of woodlands through grant system' [2],
2.2 How many owners worked with	157 woodland owners (and managers) on database. From the 157 woodland owners canvassed, 80 owners have taken the proactive step to request that their woodlands become part of a potential Ward for future group management opportunities, with 48 currently engaged within Wards [1]
2.3 What coverage does this represent?	The project has assisted with approximately 20 grant applications to the EWGS to fund new management plans, the majority of which have now been approved 3700ha of woodland has been mapped.
2.4 What services offered?	'It is estimated by the Ward Foresters that at least 220 ha will be actively managed by the end of March 2013.'[1] 'What we set up to do is broker the placement of private consultants who want more business with woodland owners who have no idea how to access the industry in the first place' [3]
2.5 Business advice offered?	Seven 'walk and talk' training events attracted 93 attendees[1] No
2.6 Woodland creation?	No

3. Activities with other sector constituents

- 3.1 Work with contractors?** Contractors are allocated a 'Ward' of owners who have expressed willingness to employ their services. 'If there's a management plan application then it's within any contractor's interests to help with that. Part of relationship forming in the hope that the long-term relationship will pay dividends' [2]
- 3.2 Work with processors?** No
- 3.3 Work to stimulate the market?** It is hoped that through the Wards' groupings, the consultants will have larger harvesting volumes to take to market with which they can negotiate more favourable terms. The brand of 'Ward Forester' has been successful and now has value as a marketing tool.
- 3.4 Networking?** 'The networking opportunities provided to woodland owners were appreciated, with survey respondents rating this as one of the most important issues the project had assisted them with.' [1]
- 3.5 Publications produced** 'During 2012 a 'Ward Forester' newsletter was regularly circulated to those on the database with emails to maintain an active contact.' [1]

4. Relationships with other stakeholders

- 4.1 Relationship with private sector** 'The Ward Foresters considered it a worthy model to develop as they benefited from the business opportunities it presented through the potential to build long-term relationships with woodland owners for sustainable management. Additionally, it was felt a certain degree of trust was engendered through the overarching branded scheme.' [1]
- 4.2 Relationship with Forestry Commission** 'Links to industry: officially, not a lot, unofficially, yes because everybody knows each other.' [2]
- 4.3 Relationship with Local Action Group** 'The Forestry Commission valued more woodland owners applying for grants and providing contact details to receive future information on developments in, for example, tree disease control.' [1]
- 4.4 Relationship with other interventions** None.
- Seven initiatives across the country are looking to adopt the Ward Forester model if the national roll-out goes ahead[4].

5. Reflections on initiative

- 5.1 Most successful outcome?** A major strength of the project has been the level of interest it has generated, with the engagement tools effective in reaching woodland owners.[1]
- Awareness raising – getting people interested in economies of scale from the grouping model. Its been very well supported all round by all stakeholders. [2]
- 5.2 What has helped make the project successful?** 'The low obligation rate for owners. They don't have to get involved in group-work. It's just their relationship with [the] forester. At the moment it's free to sign up.' [2]
- 'We don't ask the woodland owners to sign up to anything at all because that makes someone run a mile.'[3]

5.3 Problems encountered?

Scarcity of consultants [3]

Delays due to

- long lead-in and development period as the model adapted.
- registering owner details on the Rural Land Registry
- novelty of Woodfuel WIG
- diversion of FC staff resources to deal with tree disease outbreaks. [1]

Slow response rate [3]

'Still difficult for a joint management plan to be processed and applied for.' [2]

5.4 Securing funding issues

Devon County Council is ending its support for the project on 31.3.13 as scheduled. A transition phase is being negotiated and funding is being sought for national roll-out[4].

Example of initiative in action:

A 'community ward' grouping emerged in the pilot to accommodate owners with very small woodland patches whose presence in a ward might have affected the economic viability of the group. The Ward Forester for this community ward took volunteers to work the woodlands in return for firewood.

'One woodland owner is now more effectively supplying his and neighbouring premises, via a district heating scheme (approximately 200 kWh), with a supply of wood fuel through managing his woodlands, with advice and support from the project. All surveyed owners intended to use the woodfuel and/or timber extracted from their managed woods for their own use, 79% were to use some and 21% all of what was harvested' [1]

Sources:

1. Hart, J., Evaluation of the Ward Forester project. 2013, Silvanus Trust.
2. Hart, J., Interview. 2013, Silvanus Trust.
3. Bracken, M., Interview with Project worker. 2013, Ward Forester
4. Sealey, M., Interview with Project Manager. 2013, Ward Forester.

i) Woodfuel East

Woodfuel East manages the delivery of RDPE Axis 1 and 3 in the East of England through a Strategic Investment Support Programme. The project has developed with some allowed flexibility to include support for harvesting/ processing, forwarding, haulage and processing equipment to produce woodchip and firewood logs, storage and drying facilities and hard standing/access tracks within woodland. During the early stages of the programme a number of biomass boilers were supported, including a number with funds distributed on behalf on Norfolk County Council. Between 2008 and 2012 around £800 000 of grants were administered. In the year 2012-2013 a further £1 037 000 of grants have been administered [1].

Key features of the initiative:

1. It administers capital grants directly.

2. Business advisors play a key role in supporting applicants, working alongside woodland officers.
3. The local supply chain is stimulated through encouraging capital investment.
4. Conditions on the biomass boiler grants specified the sourcing of woodchip is to be from sustainably sourced timber.
5. Support is available for between 30-60% of the costs of the project depending on which measure of RDPE is being accessed.

Aims:

'Woodfuel East's objective is to stimulate an additional 110 000 green tonnes of biomass per annum from 15 000 ha of unmanaged or undermanaged woodland by 2013. Its aims are to:

- Help the region make the most of its woodfuel resource by increasing woodland management
- Encourage farms and other rural businesses to use woodchip as their primary heatsource
- Help link woodland managers with markets for their wood and support micro-businesses throughout the woodfuel sector's supply chain' [2].

Mechanisms:

Stakeholder	Activity	Part of current project?
Woodland owners:	Engagement	Y
	Advice –woodland management	
	Advice –Business related	Y
	Grant aid or support with grants applications	Y
	Training	Y
	Direct management of woods	
	New planting	
Contractors and Processors:	Advice –Business related	Y
	Training	Y
	Grant aid or support with grants applications	Y
Buyers of wood products:	Promoting local brands	Y
	Events (wood fairs etc)	
	Networking across the chain	Y

Profile:

1. About the initiative

- 1.2 Website** <http://www.woodfueleast.org.uk/>
- 1.3 Region covered** East of England
Counties: Bedfordshire, Cambridgeshire, Essex, Hertfordshire, Norfolk and Suffolk.
Unitary authorities: Luton, Bedford, Peterborough, Southend on Sea, Central Bedfordshire and Thurrock.[2]
Since 2012 also a number of project in former East Midlands region.
- 1.4 Date started** 2008. The initiative is scheduled to end in 2013 following the current RDPE round.

1.5 Origins of intervention	'The idea for Woodfuel East came from discussions in 2006 to 2007 as East England Development Agency was starting to look at next round of rural development programme' [1].
1.6 Staff numbers	4
1.7 Formal structure	Woodfuel East in an unincorporated association hosted by the Forestry Commission
1.8 Formal relationship to other organisation	Woodfuel East is hosted by the Forestry Commission. The Forestry Commission is the accountable body and awards grant offers on behalf on Woodfuel East. 'With the demise of the RDA the project has shifted over to Defra and is now supported under the Defra RDPE delivery team which is based in Cambridge' [1]
1.9 Overseen by	Woodfuel East is governed by a steering committee with representative from organizations, with an interest in forestry, woodland management and woodfuel in the East of England region.
1.9 Funding sources	£4.3m from the Rural Development Programme for England (RDPE) via the East of England Development Agency (EEDA). £50 000 per annum from Forestry Commission [2]. 'The balance of funding will come from partners, both as cash or "in kind", and from the matched funding contributions made by woodland owners and managers and micro enterprises in the woodfuel supply chain.' [2] Total economic impact will be approximately £16.4 million from 2008 to 2013.[2]
1.10 Annual running costs	'Forestry Commission pays an annual contribution to the project for £50 000. This covers staff costs not eligible under RDPE. The business development advisers salary are paid 50% RDPE and FC' [1]

2. Activities with woodland owners

2.1 How contact is made?	'It is very difficult to proactively search for them. The way we've been doing things is attending events farming update sessions, organized by NFU county shows; young farmer shows to educate people about what we can do, repeat adverts and articles in forestry magazines. A lot of the people that we could potentially help are either a member of the NFU (National Farmers Union) or CLA (Country Land and business Association). So its using all existing networks and making sure everybody is aware of what the possibilities are. That's the only way you can do it cost effectively' [1]
2.2 How many owners worked with	90 projects supported – Owners, contractors and processors
2.3 What coverage does this represent?	Not applicable
2.4 What services offered?	'What we really found is that what woodland owners and forestry contractors and suppliers need is help with working up grant

applications' [1].

'So it might be that they have a visit from a Woodfuel East adviser and a woodland officer together. If they want to take it further we ask them to write their ideas into an expression of interest form and the business adviser would come out probably for a day to talk about planning issues and the grant process. Then they would be asked to collect information and work things a little bit further and if necessary we would then go out for another day or half, or support them over the phone and give them ideas about developing markets and finding sources of timber if they are not growing themselves. It's very much an iterative process. Some people need a lot of support and some people need very little' [1].

Capital grants to landowners include; access tracks, hard standing woodfuel storage, harvesting extraction and processing equipment, boiler installations.

2.5 Business advice offered?

'Forest agents who work with smaller owners tend to be good at putting in applications to FC for woodland management activities but not necessarily for economic activities' [1].

2.6 Woodland creation?

No

3. Activities with other sector constituents

3.1 Work with contractors?

Capital grants awarded include; forwarding trailers, cranes, thinning processors, firewood processors, chippers, haulage equipment, etc

3.2 Work with processors?

Capital grants awarded include; firewood processors, woodfuel stores, moisture meters, Log splitters.

3.3 Work to stimulate the market?

'If they apply through us they have to use woodchip from sustainably produced timber. They have to provide and keep a record of where they buy the timber from over 5 year period' [1]

3.4 Networking?

'Our business adviser know the local area so they can make linkages. Someone might say I want a forwarding trailer to bring timber out and Sid might say "well two of your neighbours have one so why don't you try and set up a cooperative, or why don't you hire it in?" It's more cost effective. Quite often after 2 days of working with someone they decide not to go ahead with the grant but they still achieve their outcomes in other ways' [1].

3.5 Publications produced

[Not aware of any]

4. Relationships with other stakeholders

4.1 Relationship with private sector

Strong. Six cases of businesses returning for support as business develops and new projects are initiated [2]

4.2 Relationship with Forestry Commission

'We sit within the forest services office very close to the woodland officers. So we educate woodland officers and they are aware that there might be grants for equipment' [1]

4.3 Relationship with Local Action Group

'We are the only channel for RDPE funding in the East for forestry related investment. There was no FFIS (Farming and Forestry Improvement Scheme) in East of England' [2].

4.4 Relationship

Staff contribute to local woodland forums, West Cambridgeshire

with other initiatives

Hundreds Group, Anglian Woodland Project, etc.

5. Reflections on initiative

5.1 Most successful outcome?

'One of the biggest successes for us is not just that we can provide grants but that we have grants *with* the knowledge of the business development advisers' [1]

'If you just do grant provision and you don't have that one to one support you won't do what's best for the applicants, you do what's best for the grant scheme' [1]

5.2 What has helped make the project successful?

'Being able to give people one to one support and linking people together' [1].

'The big difference in us to other schemes in RDPE is we get quite actively involved in the projects that we set up' [1]

5.3 Problems encountered?

'Bureaucracy. The paperwork requirements under RDPE particularly for externally funded projects are very high. I now use three parallel databases to be able to report on what I need to do and to keep track of what I'm doing. Paperwork takes 30/40% of our time'[1].

Problems of repeat auditing: 'Of the figures of all the claims we've submitted there's a couple of thousand pounds that's out but does that justify spending £10 000 on accountants fees and 30% of your time filling in additional paperwork and cross checking everything? This is always the story with European funding, how much money do you stick into the admin' [1].

5.4 Securing funding issues

The structure of the project is unlikely to be repeated in the next round of RDPE due to changes in delivery bodies.

'The difference in the way we work is that we pay grants directly to the applicants and then claim the money back from the RPA (Rural Payments Authority) whereas other grants the FC does the paperwork but they get paid directly from the RPA. There are serious cash flow implications. And the Forestry Commission has about a £2mill overdraft facility for this and the Newlands project to be able to pay applicants directly' [1]

Example of initiative in action:

'Quite often somebody has come to us with an idea and they kept on developing the idea and they kept coming back' [1].

One contractor 'has grown from a one-man band to a major arboricultural contractor. With support and advice from Woodfuel East the company has established a new woodfuel business which is providing contract chipping services and supplying woodfuel chips to customers across Essex, Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire, including Stansted Airport and the Luton Hilton Hotel' [2].

Woodfuel East part-funded a refurbished Jenz chipper and Powerhand grab. 'He's now working together with a forestry contractor who we've helped with other equipment and we recently had a meeting with Bedfordshire County Council who had difficult-to-access woodlands so one of the contractors put in temporary roads in' [1].

This contractor says that without the support of Woodfuel East he would not have been able to expand: "I would have given up on the whole thing, if it hadn't been for their support. They really understand the business.[2]"

Sources:

1. van Ek, E., Interview. 2013, Woodfuel East.
2. Woodfuel East. Initiative website. 2013; Available from: <http://www.woodfueleast.org.uk/>.

j) Woodnet

Woodnet is primarily website with an active small-ads type directory called 'woodlots'. Currently there are no paid staff members but the initiative has had project funding in the past and employed staff, and would do so again should the right funding be found. The initiative has spawned 2 other projects that are both now self-sustaining and independent of the initiative.

1. **Weald woodfair** – connecting the public to woodland enterprises. Described as "the annual leading woodland, wood-use and woodcraft event in the South East of England"³, the event attracted over 12 000 people in 2012. The fair is now run by the owners of the site on a commercial basis.
2. **Woodland Enterprise Centre** - the building at the Woodland Enterprise Centre is a showcase of sustainable construction demonstrating the use of local wood in contemporary timber design. The WEC supports itself by hiring office space within its building as well as being a training base for Plumpton College. 'It runs itself commercially through building buildings, and selling them or renting space' [1]

Key features of the initiative:

- Has led to projects which have managed to become self sustaining (weald woodfair and the Woodland Enterprise Centre)
- Has created an organisational structure that endures in times where project funding is absent.
- Strong links with local horticultural college and provides training through this

³ <http://www.eastsussex.gov.uk/environment/woodlands/wealdwood/woodfair/default.htm>

Aims:

'WoodNet connects timber growers and wood users in South East England, encouraging working practices that help growers to sell their wood profitably while caring for the environment' [2].

Mechanisms:

Stakeholder	Activity	Part of current project?
Woodland owners:	Engagement	
	Advice –woodland management	
	Advice –Business related	
	Grant aid or support with grants applications	
	Training	Y
	Direct management of woods	
Contractors and Processors:	New planting	
	Advice –Business related	
	Training	Y
Buyers of wood products:	Grant aid or support with grants applications	
	Promoting local brands	Y
	Events (wood fairs etc)	Y
	Networking across the chain	Y

Profile:

1. About the initiative

1.2 Website	http://www.woodnet.org.uk/
1.3 Region covered	South East England
1.4 Date started	1996
1.5 Origins of intervention	It began as 'a partnership of woodland owners and timber processing companies wishing to make better use of locally-sourced materials' [2]
1.6 Staff numbers	No paid staff at present
1.7 Formal structure	It is both an educational charity and a Company Limited by Guarantee (not-for-profit), with Members, rather than shareholders.[2] The current members of the company are: Plumpton College. Penrose Wood Industries. The company is supported by trading activity, through sales information, consultancy and advertising, and by grants and contributions from other charitable foundations [2].
1.8 Formal relationship to other organisation	Strong relationship with Plumpton College. The County Council own the site of the Woodland Enterprise Centre and have leased it on a 125 year lease to the WEC.
1.9 Overseen by	Woodnet has several trustees 'with experience in the field of education and rural land management who contribute their expertise in a voluntary capacity. The Woodland Enterprise Centre has representation of timber growers, the forest processing sector, educational sector through Plumpton college, and the county council.

1.9 Funding sources

Arts Council
Ernest Cook Trust
Forestry Commission
High Weald AONB - Sustainable Development Fund
Leader+
Plumpton College
West Sussex County Council
East Sussex County Council [2]
Currently none.

1.10 Annual running costs

2. Activities with woodland owners

2.1 How contact is made? Owners approach Woodnet for advice and signposting to other resources.

2.2 How many owners worked with Not applicable

2.3 What coverage does this represent? Not applicable

2.4 What services offered? In his private capacity David helps owners develop management plans where appropriate.
Woodnet works in partnership with Plumpton College at Flimwell to provide a range of training courses about the management and use of wood and timber. These receive support via RDPE so they are able to offer a 60% reduction in course fees to anyone 'engaged in a business or employed by an organisation or social enterprise which is dependent on agriculture or woodland or utilises any woodland or forest products' [2].

2.5 Business advice offered? No

2.6 Woodland creation? No

3. Activities with other sector constituents

3.1 Work with contractors? Woodlots Directory is a business to business trading exchange where forest related businesses can advertise their services.

3.2 Work with processors? As above

3.3 Work to stimulate the market? 1. Woodlots directory - 1600 adverts at the moment on woodlots, selling firewood, wanting furniture, timber building.
'It basically runs itself. We got some investment to put into the website but once the website was up and running its not more than a couple of hours a week'[1]

2. Weald Woodfair
'That's a good example of the cross sector from forest owners and managers to furniture makers and people doing creative things with wood. It's a way to get local woodland mobilized into activity' [1].

3.4 Networking? 1. Woodlots directory; 2. Weald Woodfair
'We've got 12/13 000 people coming over a weekend to the woodfair. It's a very good activity for networking' [1].

- 3.5 Publications produced** 'WoodLots is WoodNet's quarterly magazine. It includes our free directory with listings of wood and timber products. We aim to help people involved in growing or working with wood in South East England to find buyers in the region. WoodLots also contains short features and details of wood-related events and courses in South East England' [2].

4. Relationships with other stakeholders

- 4.1 Relationship with private sector** There was some concern among private sector contractors when Woodnet was first set up. Since public money was helping to support Woodnet it was seen as creating unfair competition. 'I didn't take that too seriously seeing as the private sector were failing anyway to address small woodland issues' [1].
- 4.2 Relationship with Forestry Commission** 'It's been up and down. We had some very good support early on from the Commission. We invited them to join the partnership but they felt they couldn't as a government organization become formally associated. We've had some grant aid from them at times'.

- 4.3 Relationship with Local Action Group** 'Staff changes have meant that some woodland officers have promoted woodlots as a good tool but mostly as the tendency of forest management has moved towards certification and sustainable forest management and less to do with market development I think we've drifted apart somewhat'. [1]
- 4.4 Relationship with other interventions** 'I certainly made sure that forestry was in the programme for leader plus. We've had funding from leader and leader plus and because of that I sat on the original consultation panels. One of our directors is also on the local action group' [1].
- None discussed

5. Reflections on initiative

- 5.1 Most successful outcome?** The Woodland Enterprise Centre and the fact that it is now self-sustaining. 'There's not many models where you get these not for profit companies that can actually survive without continuing grants or investments. Having the premises to rent out makes all the difference' [1]
- 5.2 What has helped make the project successful?** 'I think that's the benefit of partnership working. I think some of the board members who come from the commercial sector were more concerned about that and kept their business hats on. We have commercially minded directors looking at the business plan to make sure we can run it. But we have very low costs we have used our resources to create something that is light on its feet. We are in a position to step into a new role, because we have a good partnership, good connections, to grow again quickly if an opportunity comes up to do something' [1].
- 5.3 Problems encountered?** 'Funding - I've run projects on that basis which have been 3 year projects, you can prove you can make a good impact in that time but if the funding dries up, everything fizzles out and that is worrying where in forestry we want to stimulate long term thinking and long term relationships' [1].

5.4 Securing funding issues

'The decline in local authority contributions has been disappointing. It would be nice to think that there would be a regional fund that was not just focused on capital. We are looking for funds that recognize that admin and organizational funds are part of the success of making these things happen. Without core support it's very difficult to run the projects successfully. We had an awkward situation with Leader where the core support was capped at 10% and it costs substantially more than 10% to run the project. So we felt the charity was actually subsidizing Leader which was awkward and difficult and means people are less inclined to do this in the future' [1].

Sources:

1. Saunders, D., Interview 2013, Woodnet.
2. Woodnet. Initiative Website. 2013 15.4.13]; Available from: <http://www.woodnet.org.uk/>.

Appendix 2. Woodland initiatives identified: complete list

	Project/Initiative name	Contacted?	Profiled?
1	Activating forest owners	No longer active	
2	Anglian woodland project	No longer active	
3	Axewoods cooperative		
4	Blackdown and East Devon Woodland Association	y	y
5	British horse loggers		
6	Chiltern Woodlands Project	y	y
7	Cumbria Woodlands	y	y
8	Exmoor woodcert	No longer active	
9	Forest of Avon Products	y	
10	Greenwood Community Forest		
11	Heartwoods	y	y
12	Herefordshire Sustain Project	No longer active	
13	Lancashire Woodlands Project	No longer active	
14	Marches Timber study	y	
15	Mersey Forest	y	y
16	myForest	y	
17	National Coppice Development Project		
18	Northwoods	y	y
19	Oxfordshire Woodland Project	y	y
20	Red Rose Forest		
21	Silvanus trust	y	
22	Somerset Woodland Association		
23	South West Renaissance Partnership	y	
24	South Yorkshire Forest	y	
25	Sylva Foundation	y	
26	The National forest		
27	Ward Forester Programme	y	y
28	Weald Woodnet	y	y
29	Woodfuel East	y	y
30	Woodworks (Silvanus Trust)	No longer active	
31	Working Our Woodlands	No longer active	
32	Yorwoods,	y	

Appendix 3. List of respondents

Name	Job title	Region/Initiative	Category
Nigel Blandford	Timber and Bioenergy	Mersey Forest	Initiatives
Mick Bracken	Project Officer	Ward Forester	Initiatives
Neville Elstone	Chartered Forester	Cumbria Woodlands	Initiatives
Martin Glynn	Chartered Forester	Marches timber Study	Other
John Greenshields	Woodland coordinator for Blackdown Hills and East Devon AONB	Blackdown and East Devon Woodland Association	Initiatives
Jane Hart	Silvanus Trust	Evaluation of Ward Forester project	Initiatives
Nigel Howe	Training officer for the Carpenters' Fellowship Oak Frame Training Forum	Forest of Avon products	Other
Keith Jones	Area Director, Forest Services	North West and West Midlands	FC regional staff
Chris Jones	Research Liaison officer	FC Wales	Other
Andrew Kitching	Project Manager	Northwoods	Initiatives
Nick Maskery	Project Manager	Heartwoods	Initiatives
John Morris	Director	Chiltern Woodlands project	Initiatives
Penny Oliver	Local Partnership Adviser	North West	FC regional staff
John Leigh Pemberton	Estates Manager	Torry Hill Estates	Innovative owners
Angela Pollard	Woodland Initiatives Coordinator	Woodland Initiatives Network	Other
Richard Pow	Partnerships and Expertise manager	Yorkshire and North East Area	FC regional staff
Mark Prior	Partnerships and Expertise manager	South West	FC regional staff
Jez Ralph	Silvanus Trust	Woodland Renaissance Partnership	Initiatives
David Rees	Manager	Oxfordshire woodland project	Initiatives
Mike Render	Rural Development Adviser at FCE	FCE Rural Development Officer	Other

David Saunders	Co-ordinator	Woodnet	Initiatives
Mel Sealey	Project Manager	Ward Forester	Initiatives
Edwin van Ek	Manager	Woodfuel East	Initiatives
John Varley	Estates Manager	Clinton Devon Estates	Innovative owners
John Wilding	Head of Forestry	Clinton Devon Estates	Innovative owners
Matthew Woodcock	Partnerships and Expertise manager	South East	FC regional staff

Appendix 4. Guide questions for initiatives

Guide questions for use in interviews with project workers

A. About the project:

A1. How long has project been established?

A2. Who funds your project?

A3. How many staff are employed?

A3. What formal structure does the project have?

- Company
- Charity
- Mixed model
- Subsidiary of larger body

B. Links to woodland owners:

B1. How does your project reach potential woodland owners? Or do they come to you?

B2. How many woodland owners does your project reach annually?

B3. What level of contact do you have?

Ongoing relationship

One off event

Internet contact only

B4. What kind of support do you provide to owners?

- Site specific advice on management
- Direct financial support
- Advice on financial sources
- Help applying for grant
- Practical training
- Contacts/ networking

B5. Have any of the woodland owners management practices changed as a result of contact with your project?

B6. What records do you keep of this contact and change?

B7. Would you be able to calculate hectares brought into management through your activities?

C. Reflecting on the project as a whole:

- C1. Has the project been evaluated in any way?
- C2. Can you describe your most successful outcome from the project?
- C3. Can you tell me what has worked best in terms of how the project operates?
- C4. What problems have you encountered?
- C5. What do you think would make your project more successful?

D. Thinking wider:

- D1. Do you have a working relationship with other woodland projects?
- D2. How could the work in your area be more integrated?
- D3. What changes would you like to see in the funding available for woodland owners?
- D4. Can you put us in touch with any woodland owners who may be willing to discuss their experiences with us?