

Woodland Carbon Code executive board minutes

Wednesday 18 March 2026 via Microsoft Teams

Present: Pat Snowdon, Andy Baker, Susan Szymborski-Welsh (Scottish Forestry), Fiona Hay (Welsh Government), Chris Waterfield (Forestry Commission), Rochelle Kennedy (IUCN Peatland Partnership, for item 3), Mark Caulfield (Rethink Carbon, for item 5)

Apologies: Jamie Smith, Vicky West (Scottish Forestry), Breandan Mulholland (Northern Ireland Forest Service), Mark Broadmeadow (Forestry Commission)

1. Outstanding actions

Pat provided an update on outstanding actions:

Action 1: Vicky to add units which are being held in inactive accounts as an agenda item for the next executive board meeting.

Update: Ongoing. Vicky will discuss this when she returns to work.

Action 2: Vicky to arrange a meeting with Howdens on insuring units, copying in Mark.

Update: Ongoing. Vicky will progress this when she returns to work.

2. Conflicts of interest

No members declared a conflict of interest.

3. Biodiversity project update

Rochelle provided an update on the project to develop standardised biodiversity metrics and financial tools for the Woodland Carbon and Peatland Codes.

The first phase explored how biodiversity uplift could be measured, validated and monetised within the UK's evolving nature markets.

The current phase is exploring whether a similarity index could help to measure biodiversity uplift. This would involve measuring the similarity between a project's baseline and a reference site. The team is working to aggregate biodiversity data from reference sites across the UK and is looking at financial modelling, including break-even analysis.

Next steps include piloting the methodology in summer 2026, refining how biodiversity metrics could integrate with the codes and seeking external peer review.

4. Project discussion

The board discussed project-level commercially sensitive data.

Action 3: Andy to prepare a paper for the Woodland Nature Market Strategy Board.

5. Rethink Carbon update

Mark Caulfield provided a demonstration of the new digital platform being developed to streamline processes across land-based carbon projects.

Highlights included:

- An integrated workspace bringing together spatial data, modelling, evidence management, automated checks and reporting.
- Automated analysis of project documents, including identification of missing information, cross-referenced evidence and alignment with code requirements.
- Spatial layers covering soils, designations, slope, habitat and risk datasets.
- Built-in tools for scenario modelling, carbon calculation and monitoring using remote sensing.
- Potential for future interoperability with other nature market tools.

The board noted the potential benefits of the platform, while recognising future discussions will be required on operationalisation, cost, governance and alignment with existing systems.

6. General updates

Andy and Pat provided updates on the following topics:

Statistics

Andy shared statistics about the Woodland Carbon Code.

- Almost 4,000 hectares were validated to the code from 1 April to 30 September 2025
- Over 1,400 hectares were verified to the code from 1 April to 30 September 2025

This represents a sizable increase from last year's figures.

Andy reported that there has been a surge in registrations in the first two months of 2026.

UK Land Carbon Registry

S&P Global moved the registry to a new platform last year. The Woodland Carbon Code team is working with S&P Global to address outstanding issues and ensure

good communication with users. Feedback from a recent webinar indicates that users feel there have been significant improvements in the last few months.

The project to retender for a new registry provider is ongoing.

ICVCM and BSI

The Woodland Carbon Code team submitted an application to be assessed by the Integrity Council for the Voluntary Carbon Market last year. The application has passed the completeness check and will now proceed to full assessment. The Woodland Carbon Code is the first government-run standard to reach this stage.

The code was an observer for the Peatland Code as it went through BSI's Flex 701 nature investment standards early adopter process. Members of the Woodland Carbon Code team provided feedback on the standard and process ahead of formal assessments starting in 2027.

7. Nutrient neutrality

Andy discussed how nutrient neutrality schemes in England interact with the Woodland Carbon Code. He noted that requirements under the Woodland Carbon Code about projects which are involved in nutrient neutrality schemes were published in the recent clarification to version 3.0 of the code.

Action 4: Andy to discuss further with the Forestry Commission.

8. New advisory board members

The board noted upcoming vacancies on the Advisory Board and the need for a new chair of the Disputes Panel.

It was agreed that roles should be openly advertised.

Action 5: Pat to identify an interim chair for the Disputes Panel until a permanent chair is appointed.

Action 6: Susan to advertise the vacancies through the Woodland Carbon Code channels and those of related organisations.

9. Carbon trader accounts

Andy led a discussion on the rules on applying for trader accounts in the UK Land Carbon Registry.

The board agreed it is important to have clear guidance on this.

Action 7: Andy to discuss with S&P Global and experts as appropriate how applications for trading accounts should be handled in future.

10. Website feedback survey

Susan Szymborski-Welsh presented work, through a survey and user interviews, to gather user feedback on the code's new website.

The survey results show that most respondents prefer the design of the new website and feel that information is clear and easy to understand. They also highlighted areas where improvements could be made, including enhancing the search function, sharing more examples and diagrams and providing better information about the different versions of the code and documents.

11. Compensatory planting

Andy opened a discussion on of the treatment of compensatory planting schemes under the Woodland Carbon Code.

Chris suggested it is important to be clear on the definition of compensatory planting.

Action 8: Andy to add compensatory planting to the agenda for the next Advisory Board meeting.