

Warwickshire Sustainable Farming Groups – Terms of Reference

1. Aims / Purpose / vision

Warwickshire Sustainable Farming Groups (SFGs) includes Arden Farm Wildlife Network (AFWN), South Warwickshire Sustainable Farming Group (SWSFG), and Leam and Upper Avon Sustainable Farming Group (LUASFG).

By working together at landscape scale, to link the efforts of individual farms, Warwickshire's SFG aim to create bigger, better and more joined-up, diverse natural habitats supporting farmland birds, pollinators and native mammals.

A productive farm requires a healthy natural environment for pest control, weed prevention, climate resilience, flood reduction and positive soil health for producing sustainable food. Using a whole farm approach our member farmers can make space for nature, whilst benefiting their business and still maintaining a productive farm.

The groups aim to upskill and empower its members, to increase their farm resilience and move to more sustainable practices.

Monitoring and recording the outcomes of collective action will demonstrate the groups' contribution to nature recovery, sustainable farming and landscape resilience, while providing evidence to inform future decision-making and priorities across Warwickshire

2. Objectives

- **Knowledge exchange:** Facilitate sharing of best practice, research, and practical experience in sustainable farming and wildlife conservation.
- **Building networks:** Tackle rural isolation by connecting farmers and land managers through peer support, collaboration and knowledge exchange. Increase awareness of sustainable farming and wildlife conservation, and build relationships with organisations, businesses and stakeholders that can provide expertise, funding and support to help achieve the group's objectives.
- **Funding:** Identify and pursue funding opportunities and partnerships to support aims and objectives of the groups.
- **Evidence:** Collect and maintain evidence of projects, activities and environmental outcomes delivered through the groups. This evidence will help track nature recovery, identify trends, inform future actions and demonstrate contributions to Local Nature Recovery Strategy priorities. It will also support funding applications, communications, knowledge exchange and the promotion of members' environmental achievements and farming businesses.

3. Membership

Membership is free and open to all farmers and land managers in Warwickshire, Coventry and Solihull.

4. Data

All data including membership, location and financial data will be held by Warwickshire Wildlife Trust under their Data and GDPR policies, and Warwickshire Rural Hub in

accordance with their data and GDPR policies. Data will only be shared with 3rd parties where there is a specific and clear need to do so (e.g. to support a local authority tree planting scheme) and this approach to data use would always be made clear prior to any data being shared.

5. Roles & Responsibilities

Governance of the groups is a shared partnership between facilitators, Warwickshire Rural Hub and Warwickshire Wildlife Trust. All decisions made on behalf of the groups must be agreed by all 3 parties and then, where relevant, presented to the group members for approval before being enacted.

Group members will share their varied experience and expertise of managing land for wildlife and pool ideas to enable all members of the group to benefit through the sharing of information and good practice and attend meetings as necessary to support networking and promote co-operation. Group members will also propose ideas for Group activities, promote activities of the group to other farmers and landowners to help build membership and engagement with landscape scale projects

The **Group Facilitator's** key role is to coordinate activity of the group, run group events, and contribute to funding bids for group activities. They will be the key contact liaising between the Rural Hub, Warwickshire Wildlife Trust, stakeholder group and members. The facilitator will ensure all key decisions on group activity are approved by members. They will also ensure the group is farmer led and not influenced by external organisations.

Warwickshire Rural Hub will promote groups to wider farming community in Warwickshire, coordinate bookings for training and events, send out newsletters and other important information to the groups, help find funding or partnership opportunities which will lead to long term sustainability of the groups.

Warwickshire Wildlife Trust will provide additional support for admin and running of the groups, will hold funds for the groups, will seek and claim funds on behalf of the groups and promote the groups to encourage other farmers/land managers to get involved. They will also provide further 1-1 support to farmers/landowners where applicable and draw from its network of specialists to provide expert advice to the groups.

Environmental Stakeholder group is made up of organisations in Warwickshire with an interest in sustainable farming and wildlife conservation e.g. environmental NGOs, Local Authorities, statutory agencies and local rural businesses. This group will support the group facilitators, Warwickshire Rural Hub and Warwickshire Wildlife Trust to help identify sources of advice and pots of funding to support groups aims and objectives.

Warwickshire Meadows Hub runs alongside the SFGs and will support all meadows owners in Warwickshire, Coventry and Solihull to restore and maintain their species rich meadows. Members of the Meadows Hub up can also be members of SFGs and vice versa.

6. Communication

Communications with members will be done via email and WhatsApp.

7. Review

These Terms of Reference will be reviewed annually to ensure they remain relevant and effective.

8. Confidentiality

All members shall keep secret and private any confidential information disclosed to them (including all employees, agents or advisors) by any of the members named in this Agreement. Members shall not use such confidential information for any purpose other than the purpose of this Agreement and shall not disclose any confidential information except as may be required by law.

9. Intellectual Property Rights

All intellectual property right in any information or material introduced by one member to other members named in this Agreement shall remain the property of the partner that owned such intellectual property rights prior to such an introduction.

10. Liability

No one within the Group shall be liable in any way to any other member.

11. Dispute Resolution

Any dispute or disagreement between partners named in this agreement should try to be amicably resolved informally between the relevant parties in the first instance. In the event of failure to reach a dispute resolution the following procedure will apply:

(a) Dispute should be referred to the Facilitators

- a. AFWN- Zoe Bell
- b. SWSFG- Kirsty Righton
- c. LUASFG- Emily Padfield

in the first instance who will arrange a meeting as soon as practicable, within 14 days, between the relevant parties to discuss the matter.

(b) If the dispute cannot be resolved under section (a) above or if the dispute involves the Facilitator the matter should be referred to Warwickshire Wildlife Trust as joint delivery partners of the Sustainable Farming Groups. Warwickshire Wildlife Trust will review all information and contact all parties involved within 14 days to facilitate a resolution in conjunction with input from Warwickshire Rural Hub.

(c) In the unlikely event that the dispute is not able to be resolved under section (b) above it may be referred to the Centre for Effective Dispute Resolution (CEDR) for settlement by mediation.