Revised NCFed Membership Arrangements

approved GM Tues 19 July 2022

Summary

NCFed's Affiliated Regional Group members have agreed in General Meeting to a new structure for membership subscriptions:

- Minimum 5 members per group, starting at £40 per group per year
- rising by £4 per head to maximum £200
- National Holding Group where no regional group - £10 per head
- Business Membership – min 5 employees – £200
- Affiliated Organisations - £40
- Membership Year to run between 1 August and 31 July each year

Full details below, along with results of the membership survey and recent NCFed activity

Details of New Membership Arrangements

NCFed Membership Review - 2022				
description	detail	fee (£)	no.	General Meeting votes
Holding Group	national group(s), for those without local group, each paying	**10.00**	each	Each Group / Business - **1 vote each**
Regional Group	new minimum of 5 members	**40.00**	5	
	increasing by £4 per additional member up to maximum	**200.00**	45 +	
Business	minimum 5 employed	**200.00**	5 +	
Organisation	no size limit	**40.00**	n/a	attend - no vote

Affiliated Groups

- Minimum 5 members
- Minimum £40 fee, rising at £4 per additional person to maximum £200
- One vote per member group
- Group reports minimum 5 members at re-registration each year, except where there is a register of members and a named individual who keeps that register

Holding Groups

- £10 per person
- Group rep with vote

Business Membership

- Minimum 5 employees
- £200 subscription
- With vote

Organisational Membership

- £40 per organisation
- May attend meetings
- no vote

New Membership Year

- 1 Aug to 31 July
- Proposed and to be confirmed:
    - any year's subs to be collected by date of Gathering each year
    - balance between previous and new subs due 31 March 2023

Recent NCFed Activities

- Annual National Gathering, hosted by member groups, generating significant additional income, featuring :
    - weekend activities,
    - pre-Gathering courses,
    - craft competitions,
    - auction and
    - incorporating its Annual General Meeting
- Cleft Stick Newsletter published twice a year
- Official Facebook page, Instagram and Twitter accounts
- Facebook Discussion Group gathering 1.5k members
- Facebook Charcoal page
- Contributions to formal National consultations:
    - England Tree Strategy
    - ELMs scheme
    - National Forest Inventory review
    - UK Forestry Standard review
- Participation in:
    - UK Woodland Assurance Standard Steering Group
    - Development of woodfuel certification group scheme
- Co-operation with:
    - Environment Minister in understanding regulation of UK charcoal trade
    - SmallWoods in redevelopment of coppice-products.co.uk
    - Forestry Commission in better understanding of hazel coppice restoration
- Application for support to :
    - Forestry Commission's Woods into Management fund for mapping coppice
    - Woodland Heritage for employment advice
- Attendance at:
    - APTGW, Bodger's Ball, Denbighshire, June 2022
    - RWAS, Royal Welsh Show, Builth Wells, July 2022
    - Confor, APF Exhibition, Ragley Hall, September 2022

NCFed Membership Survey May June 2022

Results

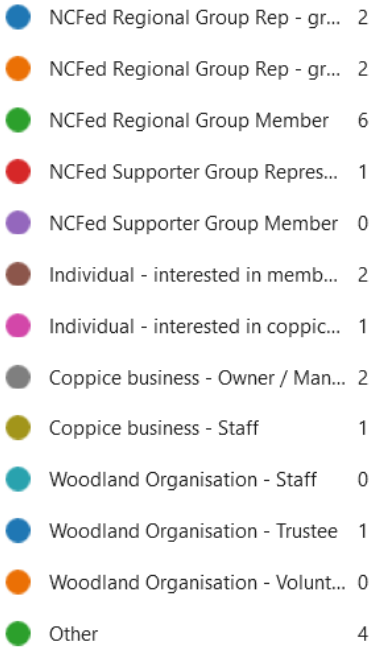
Who Responded?

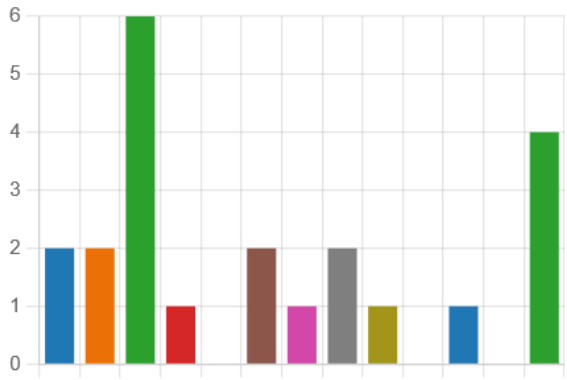
The survey had 23 respondents. We estimated that NCFed's affiliated groups currently represent about 600 individuals.

The 8 Group Reps who responded represent 38% of the groups and an estimated 40% of individual members of UK Coppice groups.

Not everyone responded to all questions. The numbers in brackets show how many contributed to the summaries of each question below.

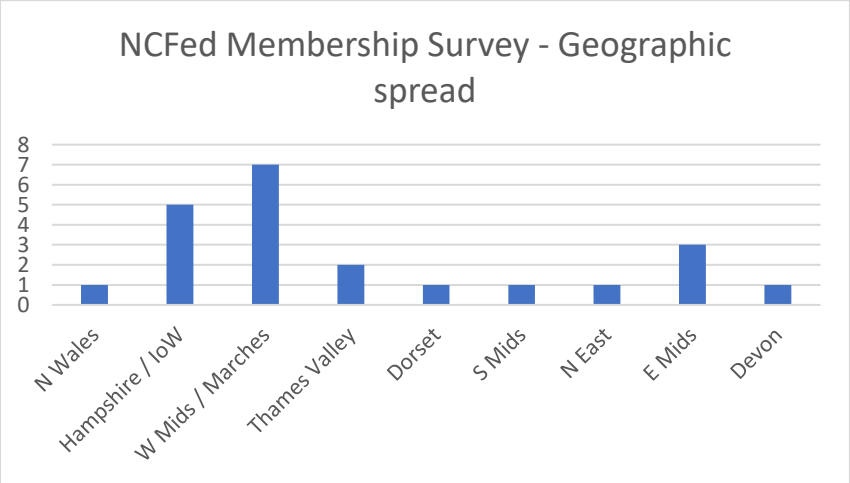
Q2. Type of Respondent (22)- Whose views were represented?





NB 2 of the 'Other's were NCFed Group Reps. 1 each having consulted and not consulted their groups, thus the first two categories displayed should each show 3 in those columns.

Q3. Respondents' Geographic Spread (22) – gathered into regions



Q4. Comments on Holding Group (17)

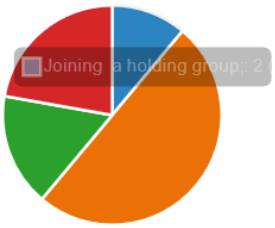
While there was some support for having a place for those without the requisite 10 minimum members to form a group that could affiliate to NCFed, there was also concern expressed abut the proposed £20 per head and the lack of a vote in discussions.

Q5. Interest in Holding Group (18)

5. Would you be interested in:

More Details

Joining a holding group;	2
Supporting a holding group wi...	9
Putting NCFed in touch with **cop**...	3
Other	4



6. Areas with No Group where there might be interest in forming one (9)

Lincolnshire, London, Isle of Wight, Powys, Devon and Cornwall were all suggested as locations where there might be interest enough to form new groups.

7. Comments on Micro Group (14)

Not much support voiced for the Micro Group idea, criticised as either too complicated to administer, too dear and, as with other concerns about the proposal for a holding group without a vote, not encouraging to those who would like a means of their views being heard in NCFed debates, having paid a subscription fee. This size of group is no longer relevant to latest proposals below.

8. Potential Micro Groups (9)

Respondents from the Midlands, North East, South Midlands and North Wales reported interest in a possible Micro Group in their area. There was some uncertainty expressed about the value of such a group.

9. Comments on Tiers of Membership (13)

This question stimulated various concerns about treating groups and their members fairly, requesting:

- Continuing a flat fee per member;
- Increasing the number of votes for larger groups;
- Ensuring all types of membership have votes;
- Doing more for p/t workers and hobbyists; and
- Correcting the previous proposed subs structure which charged more per member as any group moved to the next greater size (ie 20 members =£5/person, 21 members = £8.57/person)

10. Comments on Business Membership (16)

Responses were mixed, some supporting business membership:

- Suggesting a dedicated officer to engage businesses
- Enabling the use of the logo for promotion

… others concerned that business membership would:

- Penalise them with a significantly higher subs rate; and
- Risk undermining the purpose of NCFed as a gathering of regional coppice groups; and
- Opens the way to larger businesses potentially having unwelcome levels of control

11. Support for Business Membership (21)

11. **Do you agree that NCFed should develop an option for coppice businesses to join, separate to membership of regional groups?**

More Details

Yes	11
No	2
Maybe	6
Other	2



12. Comments on Organisational Membership (18)

Several respondents supported closer partnership working with other organisations, while others feared unwelcome influence and would rather foster partnership working where necessary, yet keep other organisations outside of NCFed membership.

Others could not see the benefits. Some wondered whether NCFed joining other organisations might be a helpful first step towards closer co-operation. There was some doubt about other organisations paying NCFed subs without having a say. Strong feelings were voiced about keeping one organisation out of NCFed membership.

13. Comments on Voluntary Input (16)

Reports of difficulty engaging volunteers were common and there was call for a better mechanism for engaging volunteers. There was some support for expectation of voluntary input though not at the expense of whatever pool of voluntary effort might be available to groups.

14. Other Membership Matters (6)

This question invited a range of issues not covered elsewhere:

- That Memebrship subs might be set at a level that enabled NCFed to buy in professional services where necessary
- That a better account of what NCFed has achieved recently would help groups support proposed increases in subs
- That NCFed can seem to be keeping members at arm's length, which is off-putting
- That hierarchy is unhelpful for easy engagement