



## NI Squirrel Forum - 13 October 2011

Jon Lees (JL) NIEA	Christine Doherty (CD) Derry City / Strabane DC
Declan Looney (DL) NIEA	Allan Galway (AG) Belfast Zoo
John Griffin (JG) DARD Forest Service	Conor McKinney (CMK) UWT
Michael Scantlebury (MS) QUB	Angela Drayne (AD) TRSG
Neil Warnock (NW) QUB	Janette Adams (JA) TRSG
Jaimie Dick (JDk) QUB	Mark Hamilton (MH) LVRSG
Ken Moore (KM) NIEA	Joe Dowdall (JD) GRSG
Rose Cremin (RC) Fermanagh DC	Janet Taylor (JT) Forest Service
John Woolsey (JW) BASC	
Julie Corry (JC) Omagh DC	

10:40 DL Welcomes everyone and introduces John Woolsey from British Association for Shooting and Conservation (BASC) and Jaimie Dick and Neil Warnock Queens University Belfast (QUB) all of whom are new to the forum.

DL goes through the action points of the 14 April 2011 meeting

*Action Point 1 DL to speak with NPWS to coordinate cross border work especially in north and west. DL spoke with his equivalent in Nation Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) Ferdia Mernell who has suggested that border LBAP officers contact their cross border counterparts. To establish who is doing what and to see what joint programmes could be run.*

*Action Point 2. DL to ask Queens to coordinate with other research institutions eg. Moredun Research Institute and Forest Service at planning stages. QUB have joined the forum and will discuss the project shortly.*

*Action Point 3. Design an information leaflet on the squirrel pox and solutions to be designed by NIEA with help from NISF. JL has written a leaflet which is downloadable from the new website which gives information about the forum and squirrel pox. Another A5 pox handout sheet was developed for the Zoo days and Squirrel Week events, copies are available from JL.*

*[http://www.doeni.gov.uk/niea/biodiversity/northern\\_ireland\\_squirrel\\_forum/squirrel\\_guidance\\_and\\_advice.htm](http://www.doeni.gov.uk/niea/biodiversity/northern_ireland_squirrel_forum/squirrel_guidance_and_advice.htm)*



***ACTION POINT 4: Information to be fed to the zoo staff about the squirrel groups including contact information or website addresses. This action has carried over as the zoo enclosures are now complete and the information boards are being designed.***

*ACTION POINT 5: for All would all interested persons wanting to take part in the sub group please make themselves known to JL asap. Done see below*

*Action point 6: Would all members feedback to JL about the venue and location for this meeting to help him choice venues in the future. No one responded!*

*Action point 7: Folks I feel we need an identity badge or logo – Done thanks to Charlie Cole who asked his friend Hanna Tisdale a Design student to develop the logo. Hanna presented JL with several designs and after some changes JL presented the best ones to forum by email and two were chosen. With the one at the top of page being used regularly. Our thanks to Hanna and Charlie for helping us out!!*

The NISF Sub-group 06 September 2011

Declan Looney (DL) - NIEA

Joe Dowdall (JD)– Glens RSG

John Griffin (JG) – FS (DARD)

Anne McComb (AMC)– Tollymore RSG

Jon Lees (JL) - NIEA

**1. Grey Squirrel control strategies inside and outside of the FS Red Squirrel Preferred Areas.**

DL explained that he has met with the British Association for Shooting and Conservation (BASC) firstly with its NI director Tommy Mayne and more recently with John Woolsey, the Development Officer (NI). The purpose of which was to see if the BASC membership could be utilised to help cull grey squirrels across NI.

DL has invited BASC to sit on the NISF and John Woolsey has agreed to do this.

There are two main routes down which BASC can help:

- a) Members should be encouraged to shoot grey squirrels as and when they are out and about undertaking their hobby.
- b) A more focused effort, where groups have a call up list of willing BASC volunteers to undertake squirrel control.
- c) Develop squirrel control into the farmers pest control scheme.

We discussed the possibility of the groups applying to the RSST for moneys for a trap loan scheme – the RSST/ESI staff are visiting NI in November and will meet with DL and JL as well some of the squirrel groups.



There is still some issue surrounding the hunting rights on Forest Service land – especially if leases are active, these may or may not mention grey squirrels as a named quarry species. Changing this mid-term may be an issue. Most forest management plans include grey squirrel control and clubs can apply to control grey squirrels through this.

Difficulties arise as there is no closed season for grey squirrels. Therefore allowing access for hunting all year round.

**13 October 2011 - JDk asked JG if rifles or air rifles could be used on Forest Service Estate rather than just shotguns as they are a more efficient means of controlling greys.**

**JG explained he would have to check this out with the forest management team and it would depend on the lease agreement.**

**JD explained recent agreement with John-Joe Cassidy (FS east region manager) for the Glens RSG operating in East Antrim region forests following the NISF control guidelines.**

JD {with reference to the BASC farm pest control scheme} local difficulties in ‘strangers’ gaining access to cull squirrels . The Glens group are working within the community to encourage grey control. This method has developed a good network of sightings and reporting etc.

DL asked if we knew which groups required help with culling?

JL: Christine in L’derry had expressed that she had plenty of volunteers but few who were keen to actually kill the trapped squirrels. Fermanagh would also benefit from some assistance.

## **2. Squirrel control and squirrel pox – future control strategies.**

- a. Update from Tollymore and Glens on Squirrel pox and the localised cull.

The Glens have had no more reported cases for several months. More healthy reds have been visible. However public access to several areas has been limited by the P ramorum outbreak which has lead to large scale felling operations.

Tollymore had a report of 3 sick reds in July but were not able to catch them and they have disappeared. They are regularly monitoring 8 sites by rotating the camera traps.

TRSG estimate that the Tollymore population has been reduced by 90% since March 2011; the wider population has been further hit by the forest fires in May.



TRSG have begun to survey and gather data on sites out with the Tollymore area.

JA stated that they now believed that up to 27 animals had been spotted with suspected pox symptoms and these animals had disappeared. There did however appear to be an increase in pine marten sightings and these were being seen regularly on the camera traps. – there then followed a discussion on pine martens and the various theories surrounding grey squirrel predation largely covered in previous minutes.

JG P. Ramorum - there has been much less clear felling so far in 2011 than first feared. Only 40Ha compared to 200Ha in 2010. Biosecurity measures may have had aided this arrest in the spread of this tree disease.

MS: Do you try and treat sick reds?

JG No we cull early – This is because a sick red squirrel suffering from pox provides the means for the poxvirus to spread rapidly throughout a red population. Although the greys are the initial carriers, once the disease has transferred from grey to red, the greatest risk of spread is considered to be from red to red. Therefore eliminating a red suffering from pox as early as possible in the disease cycle is considered necessary to restrict the spread of the disease.

MS: what about natural immunity?

DL: We were aware that that there may be a possibility of culling squirrels who could potentially pass on immunity to the disease, but in balance the potential for infected reds to act as the main vectors of the disease swayed our decision to issue licences to cull infected reds

JA We don't have any facilities or resources to treat or quarantine squirrels.

JG: Lots of anecdotal evidence that pox has been presence in the past in Northern Ireland. With older foresters reporting seeing sick squirrels in past years.

DL: that is a distinct possibility.

### **3. External Funding sources:**

- a. NIEA an application has been made to get funding to purchase camera traps for all six groups – this has been lead by Anne and Joe.
- b. UKRSG LIFE Plus Bid - JL explained that the UKRSG had been exploring the possibility of bidding for EU Life Plus moneys to work on a UK wide or a UK and Ireland wide project. JL explained that he believed that the project may not get off the ground



- c. HLF - Nothing likely to come from HLF funding during next funding round as the money was earmarked for build heritage.
- d. Intereg III - North Down and Ards, Down and Newry and Mourne Councils. JL was to meeting with the councils to discuss the potential for a project in the area.

#### **4. Publicity and press:**

- a. This is a long standing engagement that the subgroup develops a Publicity/Press strategy.

JD asked if it would possible to coordinate the groups press releases so that groups and the forum could capitalise on any interest.

He asked if the NISF should have a Press Officer to coordinate these press releases.

And each group should have a press officer.

Red Squirrel Week 2011 was discussed and Anne agreed to contact JL to request his assistance if required.

JD explained that it was very simply and relatively cheap to set up a telephone 'hotline' to report squirrel pox or sight sightings.

JD said he was happy to advise on this on request.

[ACTION POINT 1: each group to consider putting forward a press officer](#)

[ACTION POINT 2: JL to put squirrel pox alert signage templates and business cards on the website](#)

### **Today's business**

DL introduces the Queens team to the forum and invites them to talk about the project to the group.

JDk: The older [ELISA test \(Enzyme-linked immunosorbent assay\)](#) really only tells that the animal has experience of the virus.

The new [polymerase chain reaction PCR](#) test will pick up live virus or active excretors.

Neil or the team at QUBs will take the carcasses of the greys and reds. They believe that faecal material, urine and saliva can be used also. Further studies aim to investigate whether ecto-parasites can be tested, which may give an indication as to how the disease is transmitted. There will also be live trapping of red squirrels for sampling under NIEA and Scientific Procedures licence. NW explained that the testing could be complete in 8 to 10 hours, a protocol of the animal handling and release policy is yet to be developed.



There would be a moral obligation to not to release a red that was positive for pox. However do they need to hold animals until the tests are complete if the animal has no physical symptoms?

**Action Point:** NIEA and QUB to meet to discuss the options.

While the first year of the project is being funded by NIEA QUB are hoping to secure funds to hire a field officer to collect samples from the groups and to undertake trapping. It is envisioned that this post will also be widened to include education. JDk is investigating a source of external funding via the Landfill Tax Credit Scheme that may be available.

JA: Raised the issue of live trapping in Tollymore and stated that the reds in the area were under stress at present and the TRSG would not want to see too much more additional pressure on these animals.

DL: we will take that into the consideration.

**JDk asked that it be noted in the minutes that the Forum broadly supported the idea.**

**All: There were no objections.**

DL: Are there any considerations of sampling effort in relation to population structure and density?

JDk – will use current collection of carcasses first. Lisa Collins will then determine the next areas to be actively sampled.

JA: Red testing in Tollymore will the group be kept informed? And it is very difficult to determine if a trapped animal has pox before release.

DL: yes the groups will be kept in the loop.

JDk Hopefully the field officer could collect the blood sample quickly return it to the lab where Neil could have results in under 10-12 hours. QUB are investigating the use of urine, faecal, and saliva tests. It is thought that the cages could be swabbed to test for virus possibly giving clues to the mode of transmission.

JC: West Tyrone are also interested in Landfill Tax credits so it may be good if we can work alongside QUB.

DL: [The Red Squirrel Survival Trust RSST](#) are coming across to NI on 14 November the exact agenda is unclear but they are keen to talk to NIEA and the groups. We are interested to see if they can supply traps to the squirrel groups and or help set up a trap loan scheme. Joe is coordinating this meeting.

CMK: a discussion around volunteer resources and possibility of utilising the UWT volunteer base, especially in the west of the country.



JG: Mentioned the research being carried out by Lisa Signorile at UCL including the inbreeding in grey squirrels – QUB are aware of the project. Lisa has also been in touch with JG and JL.

### **Belfast Zoo – Allan Galway**

2000 people attended the squirrel weekend at the zoo, this down on previous years but the weather was not great.

Squirrel Enclosures are largely finished. Allan is now requiring 2-4 red squirrels under NIEA licence. These are to be young animals preferably unrelated and free from pox.

**Action Point 3: For the groups and NIEA:** information for interpretation boards around the squirrel enclosures.

JDK John Gurnell has published a paper on maintaining captive squirrel populations. – **Jaimie to forward a copy of the paper to Allan.**

### **BASC – John Woolsey**

[BASC](#) has around 130000 members in the UK of which 2500 are in Northern Ireland.

<http://www.basc.org.uk/>

Members are interested in shooting and fishing and other country pursuits.

[Greenshoots project](#) – UK Biodiversity Action Plan, it has been well developed in GB but less so in NI.

BASC gained funding from the Northern Ireland Environment Agency to run the survey phase of a local project with our members in 2006. Their position was similar to that of others trying to achieve BAP targets, in that there was limited information on biodiversity in the wider countryside in comparison with designated sites and there was not an efficient mechanism to get access to private land for the Local BAP process. A BASC Green Shoots project offered a solution to both of these issues.

The results were impressive:

- 30% response
- Over 3,610 sq km surveyed
- This is equivalent to 25% of Northern Ireland
- Over 16,800 new records of species and habitats created by BASC members
- 95% of members gave BASC permission to share the records with our partners

Due to lack of funding the aim of appointing a NI Green Shoots officer was not achieved. BASC are in the process of developing an online mapping tool to help expand the Green Shoots programme into NI.



Squirrel records produced a similar picture to existing records. BASC members have access to a wide range of private land that the Government Agencies and other NGOs have limited knowledge of.

BASC members are skilled, have insurance and adhere to a code of good conduct.

BASC are working with the [Ulster Farmers Union](#) to provide a pest control service to NI famers.

## BASC NI / UFU Pest Control Scheme

BASC NI is offering to put members in touch with UFU members who are experiencing problems with pest birds, foxes or rabbits.

If you would like to be included on the pest control register please contact BASC NI on **028 92605050** or **email**

<http://www.ufuni.org/Portals/ed8f31d6-082d-4fe0-b9bb-fed2c64c6304/BASC.pdf>

JD: is there a reporting mechanism for bag counts?

JW: Not specific to the pest control scheme, but it is possible.

DL: Number of clubs or syndicates in NI?

JW: not sure but I'll find out.

JA : What about trap hygiene ?

JW I have seen the documents on the NISF website and I will work with the NIEA to protect best practise.

JDk: keen to get some of the carcasses generated by the programme.

**Action Point 4:** BASC and NIEA to meet and develop information.

### **Group reports:**

#### **Glens Red Squirrel Group Update to NISF at meeting in Belvoir Park 14 Oct. 2011 – Joe Dowdall (the chair GRSG)..**

Since the last meeting the Glens Red Squirrel Group has continued its program of feeding and observing Red Squirrels in the Glens area.

### **Activities.**



**April.**

Organised a “Red Squirrel” Day in Glenariff Forest.

Arranged a Public meeting in Carnlough to heighten awareness regarding Squirrel Pox outbreak.

**May**

Red Squirrel trail walk Glenarm

Public meeting in Cargan

Red Squirrel Trail Walk in Ballycastle Forest.

AGM

**June**

Fund raising Treasure Hunt

Trapping Training Shanes Castle

**July**

Information Stand at Cushendun “Open Day”

Feeder Workshop Glenariff

Fund raising Quiz

**August**

Attended Red Squirrel weekend at Belfast Zoo

Information Stand in Cushendall during the Heart of the Glens Festival

Guided Walk in Glenariff Forest and Cushendun

**September**

Trapping Training Derry

Carnfunnock Autumnfest

**October**

National Trails day Walk Glenariff

Red Squirrel Week Walks Glenarm and Ballycastle

Red Squirrel Spotting week in all Primary schools in the Glens

Trapping Training Stormont.

**Planned Activities**

Event	Location	Date / Time	Lead Member
Halloween Quiz and Fireworks	Laragh Lodge Glenariff	29 Oct. 8.00pm	Joe
Trapping training	Carnfunnock	24 Oct. 2.00pm	Joe/Daniel
Feeder Workshop	Glenariff	26 Oct. 7.00pm	Joe
Visit St. Killian’s College	Garron	Nov. To be confirmed	Joe/Daniel
Visit by RSST	Various	14/15 Nov.	Group
Group Meeting	Glenariff	16 Nov. 7.00pm	Maria
Visit Larne	Larne	Nov. To be	Joe/Daniel



<b>Grammar School</b>		<b>confirmed</b>	
<b>Guided Walks</b> <b>Pre Christmas</b>	<b>Glenariff</b> <b>Ballycastle</b>	<b>17 Dec.</b>	<b>Group</b>

The above is not an exhaustive list. It will be added to and some dates and times may change.

JD was keen to get the old EHS school resource pack on Red Squirrels updated and re-printed.

**Action point** JL to look into this.

He would like Squirrel Week 2012 as an agenda item for the next meeting. (This has been noted on the next agenda)

Highlighted the positive development of Larne BC and Moyle DC agreeing to work with the Glens Red Squirrel Group, and permit localised culling of grey squirrels.

(JDk suggests that the Buttolo deer lure is very effective for luring squirrels ~£25).

<http://www.bushwear.co.uk/nostyles.php?ProductID=312716&ClassID=71>

(other suppliers are available this is first one I found on googling!)

### **Tollymore RSG**

*Since our last meeting on the 14<sup>th</sup> April we have had one more confirmed case of the squirrel pox virus.*

*Total confirmed cases 16.3.11 until 22.4.11 = 11*

*Suspect carcasses awaiting collection to date = 9*

*Suspected sick reds reported and not caught = 27*

*We thought things had settled down as last sick red was seen on the 13<sup>th</sup> August, then unfortunately we had a report of a red falling out of a tree on the 6<sup>th</sup> September. This is the last report of a sick red that we have had.*

*We are not supplementary feeding at the present as there is plenty of natural food available, this will be reviewed on a weekly basis.*

*The number of red squirrels in the park has crashed and in areas where we had traditionally seen good numbers of reds they have now gone. We have used the motion cameras to monitor these areas and continue to so.*



*We are currently giving recording cards to regular local walkers to record any squirrel activity. We are then going to put cameras in these areas if there are fresh signs of natural feeding and see what we pick up.*

*We are receiving sightings of red squirrels within Tollymore and surrounding areas, but these are infrequent. Also there is an abundance of natural food at the minute and it is increasing difficult to spot squirrels in the tree canopy – this will of course change once autumn has passed.*

*We are worried about the low numbers of red squirrels in the park and the severe winter which is currently being forecast. We feel that we will have to start feeding at sometime to ensure that any existing population is sufficiently fed to successfully breed in the spring.*

*Grey squirrel control is still ongoing and reported sightings are being dealt with by the FS wildlife officer and staff.*

### **Activities**

*TRSG attended events at Belfast Zoo, Silent Valley and we had Red Squirrel Day last Sunday (9<sup>th</sup> Oct) in partnership with FS and the help from Jon Lees NIEA. The event went well with approx. 250 attending but we did not have squirrel walks.*

*TRSG will be taking part in the BBC Live n Deadly road show which is on the 23<sup>rd</sup> October, in Castlewellan Forest Park.*

## **West Tyrone Red Squirrel Group report - NISF meeting 14<sup>th</sup> April 2011 by Julie Corry**

### **Members and support**

- 3 meetings have been held since last meeting
- Members and attendance at meetings is still changing, with new people attending as word spreads, and others not as time goes on. A core group through from Baronscourt and Drumquin are very keen, so this will still remain our focus area.

### **Grey Squirrel Control**

- The group are keen to move forward with trapping and dispatching. We have shared out the traps that exist within the group but plan to make an application for funding soon to buy more. Various members are exploring opportunities for this.

### **Education and awareness**

- Our annual red squirrel event took place on Sunday 2<sup>nd</sup> October at Gortin Glen Forest Park, a partner event between Omagh District Council and Forest Service. As it was National Trails Day we tagged onto that for extra publicity which worked well. We got coverage in national newspapers and well as a slot on Your Place and Mine. Whilst we



had the usual good turnout of about 200 people, it was noticed they were from further afield than just Omagh and Strabane.

### **Recording and reporting**

- General consensus is that there are more sightings of reds in the Drumquin area this summer/autumn. Grey sightings are also on the increase in the Castlederg/Aghyaran areas as reported by Forest Service.
- The group have decided to produce small cards and posters appealing for sightings that have a mobile number to text the information to. We hope this will make it easier for people to report sightings. With a larger database of records, the group will be able to direct their trapping efforts better in 2012.

### **Research**

- We have had a request from Earl Castle Stewart from Cookstown. He wants to trial an experiment on greys somewhere in Northern Ireland and after approaching Baronscourt has been redirected to Lisnamallard House, my workplace. The experiment is to kill and burn the skins of 5 – 10 male grey squirrels and then sprinkle the ashes around broadleaf woodland that is under threat from grey squirrel vandalism. There is some thought that this deters other greys from coming into this area.
- This is not meant to be a red squirrel conservation measure but rather a tree protection one. However, even if it does work (and how do you prove it), the greys are displaced to somewhere else.
- If any of the other groups interested in trialling this, please get in touch with Earl Castle Stewart.

### **Lagan Valley Red Squirrel Group – Mark Hamilton**

There is a small population of reds still appearing on the estate. There is probably less than 30 reds in the estate and the Lagan Valley Park. The group are still feeding hazel nuts in feeders to supplement the diet.

The group has gained a few members recently and now has 8 regular supporters.

The Desk top study commissioned by the group and Lisburn BC and Belfast City Council was carried out by RPS and has established that further study is required. Tendering for this additional work is ongoing and the project is last about 2 months.

The Group is undertaking a public information event on the 15 October with the support of [Grahams Construction](#). The event will start at 13:00 until about 16:00.

Grahams are also helping in the design and construction of a special squirrel feeder that can be raised and lowered. It is hoped that the positioning of the feeder will be such that it can be easily viewed by the public but out of their reach to prevent the wrong foods being fed to the squirrels.



### **Fermanagh Red Squirrel Group – Rose Cremin**

The group held a trapping workshop during May which was attended by Forest Service Staff and NIEA staff in addition to the volunteers.

Due to meet again shortly, after the summer break when the volunteers were monitoring their chosen areas.

Rose has 40 members on the mailing list and of those 10-12 are very active.

There has been a series of road kills near Lough Navar, Derrygonnelly. RC has approached DRD Roads Service to enquiry about the erection of a rope bridge across the road. Discussions are ongoing and RC will keep us up to date on the developments.

- There has been interest in the squirrel populations of Kesh and Pettigoe.
- The group has secured £800.00 through Landfill Communities Fund to support the work of the group, largely through purchasing basic equipment such as feeders, traps and hygiene materials.
- Two walks were delivered as part of Red Squirrel Week. These were delivered as Family Walks during the Fermanagh Walking Festival in October 2011 - 'Tracking Fermanagh's Local Red Squirrel Population with the LBAP Officer' held at Florence Court Estate and from Cooneen Centre, Slieve Beagh.
- We are investigating the possibility of erecting a rope bridge at Lough Navar/Correl Glen where we are receiving historic and persistent road kill records. Permissions are in place however public liability remains an issue and we are still trying to resolve this.

### **L`Derry and Strabane Red Squirrel Group – Christine Doherty**

Currently has around 40 members on the mailing list and 6-10 active volunteers. Mainly in the Derry City area, however there is scope for expansion.

There were a reports of a sick red squirrel on the Victoria Road, it was not caught at the time but one which was eventually hit by a car in the same area. This was sent to QUB for testing.

JD helped with some trap training with members and some Woodland Trust Staff.

A couple of traps have been supplied to members for use on their own land.

The group currently has three target sites: Prehen, Gransha Wood and Muff Glen near Eglinton.



The group also held a Squirrel Week Event at St. Columbs Park which was successful and attracted a great deal of interest despite it being a dull grey day. We even saw a red squirrel. The Event was hosted by Derry City Council and the NIEA also attended.

### **Establishment of an Outer Ards Group**

There has been an increase in interest in the formation of a Red Squirrel Group operating on the Outer Ards. We understand that the National Trust are keen to help develop this. Unfortunately Andrew Upton from the National Trust is on leave until next week so we have not been able to take this forward yet. JL is to speak to Andrew in the coming days. (JL spoke with Andrew on the 24/10/11 and he confirmed that the Trust are interested in taking the group forward)

JDK: mentioned that he is from the area and is also keen to be involved in the group and knows that there many landowners who are also interested.

JW mentioned that BASC had a meeting with Andrew Upton and John Kerr of the National Trust on 19 July 2011 when the subject of involving the various BASC affiliated wildfowling clubs on Strangford Lough in grey squirrel control in the Outer Ards area was discussed

**Action point 6:** NIEA to meet with National Trust and other interested parties to establish the group.

There is also interest in forming a group in South Armagh / Down around the Slieve Gullion area – with help of the ‘Ring of Gullion’ community officer Darren Rice.

**Late news:** Mark Edgar the Biodiversity from Dungannon / Cookstown & Magherafelt Councils has been approached by people in Stewartstown interested in developing group in that area. Mark is to hold a public meeting in due course.

### **Funding:**

JL has been involved in a potential UK Red Squirrel Group funding bid for LIFE plus funds from the EU. The details are somewhat unclear currently and it may not come to anything but JL will keep the forum in the loop.

JL looked into the use of HLF funds but it would seem the 2012/13 funding round is aimed more at Built heritage projects and it is unlikely that squirrels could meet the criteria.

The Groups lead by Joe Dowdall (GRSG) and Anne McComb (TRSG) have applied for ~£7000 funding from the NIEA Natural Heritage grant scheme to purchase ~24



camera traps for squirrel monitoring. This bid has progressed through the initial stages and a decision is expected before Christmas.

JDK – if this is successful the groups should contact Maire-Ann Freeman of QUB who has developed some methodology to use the cameras for population monitoring.

The item on grey squirrel control on NT properties is to be carried forward to the next meeting as no one is here from the NT.

JL: advised everyone that the website has been re-launched and if anyone has any comments to pass them back to him by email or using the new enquiry email address: [Squirrels@doeni.gov.uk](mailto:Squirrels@doeni.gov.uk)

**The next meeting will be 26 April 2012 at a venue to be announced**