



THE WOODLAND LEAGUE

F.A.O. Mr Kevin Jones – Soil Association

26 May 2004

We will be available to meet with you at Derrybrien on the 5th of June for a full day meeting, and site visit. If a full day is sincerely not possible on that Saturday, some of us will make all efforts to meet with you additionally, on a weekday. Please communicate your schedule.

I am contactable at this e-mail address of karenolan@eircom.net and ph: 087 9933157.

In the interests of clarity we would like to continue our communications with you, we prefer not to engage with Vanessa Linforth, purely for the reasons outlined below.

You replied to our recent queries, asking for some time to respond as you were busy with other assessments and you mentioned June as a time to meet up in Ireland. We regret Soil Association could not respond formally and **we find ourselves requesting a formal response now, to include answers to some of our queries and arranging a time and place for a dedicated recorded meeting befitting the gravity of the issues we raised**, on behalf of many frustrated stakeholders. We would require adequate time on this day i.e. at least a full day with site visit, anything less than this would show disrespect for these stakeholders and F. S. C. principles. We regret the preemptory nature of Soil Association 's engagement at such short notice through a third party.

Vanessa Linforth. Vanessa is the latest in a long line of individuals who appear to be slotted into this intermediary buffer role, since S.G.S. started this process in 1999. (Some of us have been involved since this time, unlike Soil Association) The first two S.G.S. people were a Mr Gray and Ms Nussbaum who appeared committed and totally professional at the outset, however within a short time they had moved to a sister company called Proforest (this S.G.S. subsidiary help's forest company's achieve certification) operating in the same building as S.G.S. qualifor. This is a classic case of gamekeeper turn's poacher. It is our understanding that Coillte may have been a client of Proforest. This is an example of the spurious nature of S.G.S. engagement with N.G.O.'s in Ireland. Mr Richard Johnstone was another player in this charade, he then also left with the certification contract and teamed up with Soil Association. No explanation was ever given for S.G.S. suddenly withdrawing from the process.

From a phone conversation with a Soil Association PR person, Melissa Kidd regarding Mr Johnstone's *bona fide's*, Ms Kidd responded by letter informing us, that Mr Johnstone was no longer with Woodmark. We are very conscious that this process is a profit making exercise for some, which make's openness and transparency more of an imperative than ever, we must not lose sight of the lofty ideals of the F.S.C. Principles and the importance of the currency of trust which sound N.G.O.'s are rightfully entitled to. Mr Kevin Jones stepped into the breach and now we are expected to engage with Vanessa Linforth whom we have had no previous contact with.

We are unhappy that without consultation or notice the accreditor S.G.S. was replaced by Soil Association, a new regime is put in place without a word. Where is the transparency and spirit of Agenda 21 in this scenario. These patterns of inconsistency and chaos are undermining sound N.G.O.'s confidence in the process, can you confirm whom the Woodland League are dealing with now.

Vanessa Linforth expressed difficulties contacting me (Andrew St Ledger), the Woodland League are using the email: karenolan@eircom.net until we set up our own website etc., apologies if this caused confusion. Vanessa did send me a letter on 6th of May to an old address in Meath, Coillte had provided her with, although they do have my updated Co.Clare address, that Coillte were able to use when sending me their annual report.

Please could you reply to the following points:

1. As some of our N.G.O.'s representative's will have to travel long distance's to attend the provisionally arranged meeting at Derrybrien on 5th of June (to be confirmed by Kevin Jones), please outline the proposed financial remuneration plans of the Soil Association to facilitate these important stakeholders.
2. In reply to a query from Brendan Kelly (Woodland League Liaison Officer), Dr Ruth McGrath of I.F.C.I. claimed that there were no records of the Monivea and Derrybrien problems, is she commenting on the same process, could you please clarify.
3. May we have contact details of the Certification Scrutiny committee chaired by Mr Christopher Stopes.
4. We request Soil Association bring copies of all stakeholder correspondence with S.G.S. and themselves since 1999, particularly Ted Cook's observations. We wish to ascertain that all relevant **records have been transferred by S.G.S. to Soil Association.**
5. We have approached I.F.C.I. (thru Brendan Kelly) for copies of the original consultation document, as well as the first and second **draft standards** upon which you are evaluating F.S.C. principles in Ireland, to no avail. We are requesting you to **ensure these documents are present** along with any other pertinent certification documentation showing **how the social and environmental chambers in I.F.C.I. endorsed these standards.** We suggest strongly, a member of I.F.C.I. should be present at our meeting with abovementioned.
6. Does Ecosylva help forest companies achieve certification, and are Coillte a client of Ecosylva, or have they been at any stage? It would be very helpful for us to have both companies previous list of client's with references, since 1996. This will help us to familiarise ourselves with you and lead to a better relationship as we were never consulted when you took over from S.G.S., it will go some way to restoring trust with stakeholders, currently deeply concerned with this process.
7. What are your guidelines for any procedure now, as regards raising of current issues for Ireland, and who is the appropriate contact person.
8. Was Richard Johnstone a member of Soil Association while working with S.G.S., and is he still working in the Soil Association or subsidiary.
9. Was Kevin Jones or Vanessa Linforth an employee of Ecosylva and please could you elaborate on Melissa Kidd 's correspondence of the 12th of March, explanation of Ecosylva's role to quote: "Ecosylva limited delivers all aspects of the Woodmark FSC certification programme on behalf of Soil Association limited and works from the Soil Association offices in Bristol."
10. What is the current status of Coillte's genetically modified tree programme in regard to certification and how does it fit with the principles of sustainable forestry espoused by FSC.

We trust you will respond ASAP to our queries and we look forward to having a productive meeting at Derrybrien.

Yours faithfully

Andrew St. Ledger

PRO: The Woodland League

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Please also note:

In writing to Soil association recently, we wish to clarify a number of points.

- Firstly, we erroneously attributed a PhD to Ray Monahan. Ray Monahan wishes to have his place of employment removed from this process. We would ask the Soil Association, in accord with Mr. Monahan's request to the Woodland league to delete from the record his lectureship at Tralee University.

The Woodland League enjoys Mr Monahan's continued support and the Woodland league remains a vehicle to voice his further valuable inputs to the process.

- The Woodland League quoted from a book called, *A History of Irish Forestry* by Eoin Neeson, first published by The Lilliput Press in 1991. The quote concerned social forestry in an Irish context.(point#7)

- Andrew St.Ledger would like to make it clear, his engagement in the process as an individual stakeholder is thru the coalition, represented by The Woodland League.