

Confor adds more video content on new website

Confor has stepped up its leadership in the sector by launching a new website featuring more original video content to explain the wide-ranging benefits of forestry and timber.

Alongside member content and a library of key documents, the website is intended to help tackle the knowledge gap among the general public and those who influence public policy about the forestry and wood sector. This year, Confor has already produced a short film, *Our Forests Our People* – watched well over 3000 times – and *Animating Forestry*, which explains the link between wood products and local forests. This has also attracted around 3000 views on Vimeo and YouTube.

In addition, the new website features four short videos, which look at the breadth of benefits offered by forestry and wood. They are called: *Forestry and the Economy*; *Forestry and Climate Change*; *Forestry and People*; and *Forestry and the Environment*. Confor's current website received 10,000 unique visits a month, offering an excellent means to promote greater understanding of the sector – and the new site aims to build on this.

"This has been a very successful year for Confor so far and the website launch continues the positive momentum," said Confor's chief executive Stuart Goodall. "We have made real progress on highlighting the role of tree planting as part of a longer-term and more natural approach to flood prevention - and have worked hard to inform and engage members around the EU referendum.

"We have re-energised the All-Party Parliamentary Group with high-quality and well-attended discussions on these two subjects (flooding and the EU) and engaged constructively on numerous issues with Forestry Minister Rory Stewart."

Planting rates

Mr Goodall said Confor had also made real progress in convincing the Scottish Government that it needed to step up planting rates to protect a £1bn industry - by getting several key policy priorities into the SNP manifesto.

But he said the biggest issue of all was telling the positive forestry and timber story to a wider audience.

"We recognised some time ago that there was a clear need for simple visual materials to tell the forestry and timber story to a wider audience," he said. "We were delighted by *Our Forests Our People* and the positive reaction to it, and the animation has built on this. The new



The home page of the new website and, below, a still from *Forestry and the Economy*



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videos take things a step further by appealing to different audiences and building out from the core messages.

"To be a successful sector, we need to tackle outdated misperceptions and demonstrate the significant benefits we provide to society. The videos, animation and now the new website - plus our continuing efforts to promote forestry and timber through the media - are vital to achieving that goal."

The new website was designed by Innovation Digital in Glasgow, with the initial internal work led by Confor's communications manager Stefanie Kaiser. The latter stages of the project were led by James Thomson, who is covering Stefanie's maternity leave.

Stuart Goodall said: "Stef and James have put a huge amount of work into the website and deserve great credit for delivering a more contemporary, functional and content-rich site. This reflects the way that Confor has raised its game and modernised its operations.

"This year so far, as well as the video and animation, we have produced very well-received documents on forestry and flooding, as well as gender and diversity in the sector. Our Scottish Parliament election document in Scotland led to us getting a very substantial section on forestry in the SNP's manifesto and we will be working closely with the new Scottish Government to deliver this."

Westminster

Confor has also refreshed the All-Party Parliamentary Group for Forestry at Westminster and held two very successful meetings – one on forestry and flooding, the other a debate on the EU referendum. Confor published a discussion paper on the potential implications of the referendum for the forestry and timber sector and also held a poll, which shows narrow support to remain in the European Union.

"All this activity is designed to raise the profile of the forestry and timber sector and ensure it is seen as a very significant economic sector which can also deliver substantial benefits for the environment and for society and people," said Mr Goodall. "Ultimately, if we can achieve this, our members and the whole sector will benefit greatly.

"We have had tremendous feedback about Confor's work this year from inside and outside the sector and we are determined to keep up the momentum. We hope everyone enjoys, and shares, these new short videos and further spreads the positive messages about the increasingly confident forestry and timber sector."

The new Confor website can be accessed at www.confor.org.uk