

# The Future is Forestry

TACKLING CLIMATE CHANGE WITH TREES

A CONFOR MANIFESTO



## THE CLIMATE ELECTION

People love trees. In the 2019 UK Public Opinion of Forestry survey, 88 % agreed or strongly agreed “a lot more trees should be planted”.

People also want action on climate change. A YouGov poll found climate change was the second most important issue for young people in the 2019 election, after Brexit.

So let’s take advantage of “the climate election” to deliver what the public wants – planting more trees and tackling climate change.

Let’s also manage woodland better to let in light, lock up carbon, allow wildlife to thrive and produce more wood.

And let’s use more wood – to lock up carbon and replace energy-intensive materials like steel, concrete and plastic.

Confor and its members can help deliver the change needed.

Our simple, three-point action plan for General Election 2019 is:

**PLANT MORE TREES**

**MANAGE OUR WOODS BETTER**

**USE MORE HOME-GROWN WOOD**

It is time for action, time to show that #TheFutureIsForestry.

So how many trees should we be planting?



## OUR PLANTING TARGETS

# Planting the future

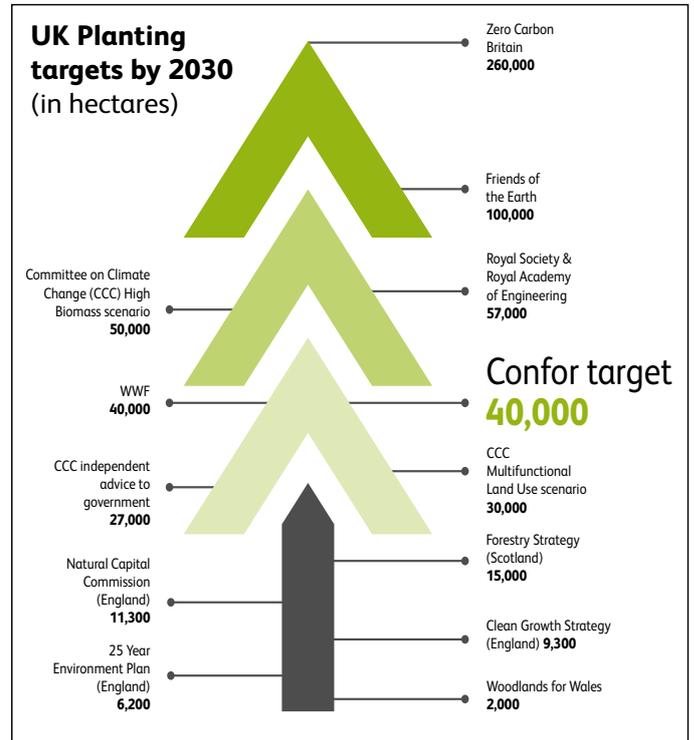
Only 10% of England (13% of the UK) is covered in trees, against a European average of around 40%.

The call for greater tree planting is coming from all quarters, with Friends of the Earth proposing that the UK double its tree cover by planting around 100,000 hectares of new woodland annually (about 200 million trees).

Confor, with its 1500 forestry and wood using businesses across the UK, has estimated what we believe could realistically be achieved now.

These planting targets, set out in the Woodland Carbon Targets table below, are ambitious and achievable, though they will require real political leadership and determination to drive change in England and Wales.

While Scotland beat its annual target last year of 10,000ha, England planted just 1420ha against a target of 5000ha and Wales managed just 520ha against a target of 2000ha. Around 240ha were planted in Northern Ireland.



Our politicians must be more ambitious and demonstrate real commitment on tree planting – or the constant claims of ‘tackling the climate emergency’ will prove to be nothing but hollow words.



### Confor's planting targets by 2030 (in hectares)

	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030	Total 2020-30
Scotland	12,000	12,000	14,000	14,000	15,000	15,000	16,000	16,500	17,000	17,500	18,000	167,000
England	2,000	3,000	4,000	5,000	6,500	7,500	8,500	9,000	9,500	10,000	10,000	75,000
Wales	500	1,500	2,000	3,500	5,000	6,000	7,000	7,500	8,000	9,000	9,000	59,000
N Ireland	500	500	1,000	1,000	1,500	1,500	2,000	2,500	2,500	3,000	3,000	19,000
<b>UK</b>	<b>15,000</b>	<b>17,000</b>	<b>21,000</b>	<b>23,500</b>	<b>28,000</b>	<b>30,000</b>	<b>33,500</b>	<b>35,500</b>	<b>37,000</b>	<b>39,500</b>	<b>40,000</b>	<b>320,000</b>

We ask all political parties to



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## PLANT MORE TREES

### **Adopt Confor's woodland creation targets for the UK**

- Plant 30,000 hectares of new woodland annually by 2025
- Scotland: 15,000 ha / 30m trees
- England: 7500 ha / 15m trees
- Wales: 6000 ha / 12m trees
- Northern Ireland: 1500 ha / 3m trees

### **Plant the Northumberland Forest**

Deliver on the pledge to plant the Northumberland Forest through a regional forest partnership.

Create more partnerships to plant more forests across England.

### **Reduce bureaucracy**

Make the application and approval process for woodland creation simpler and quicker. Learn from Scotland's positive experience.

### **Protect Britain's trees**

Make the UK's plant health regulations the most robust in the world post-Brexit.





## MANAGE OUR WOODS BETTER

Too much forestry in the UK – especially broadleaf woodland – is not well-managed. It lacks light and isn't good for wildlife. If we manage our woods better, we can deliver huge benefits for nature AND reduce carbon – because:

- There is more existing woodland than any new planting scheme could create;
- Established trees, when thinned, soak up carbon much more quickly than newly-planted ones;
- Added benefits – including improved biodiversity and recreational opportunities – are immediate.

## USE MORE HOME-GROWN WOOD

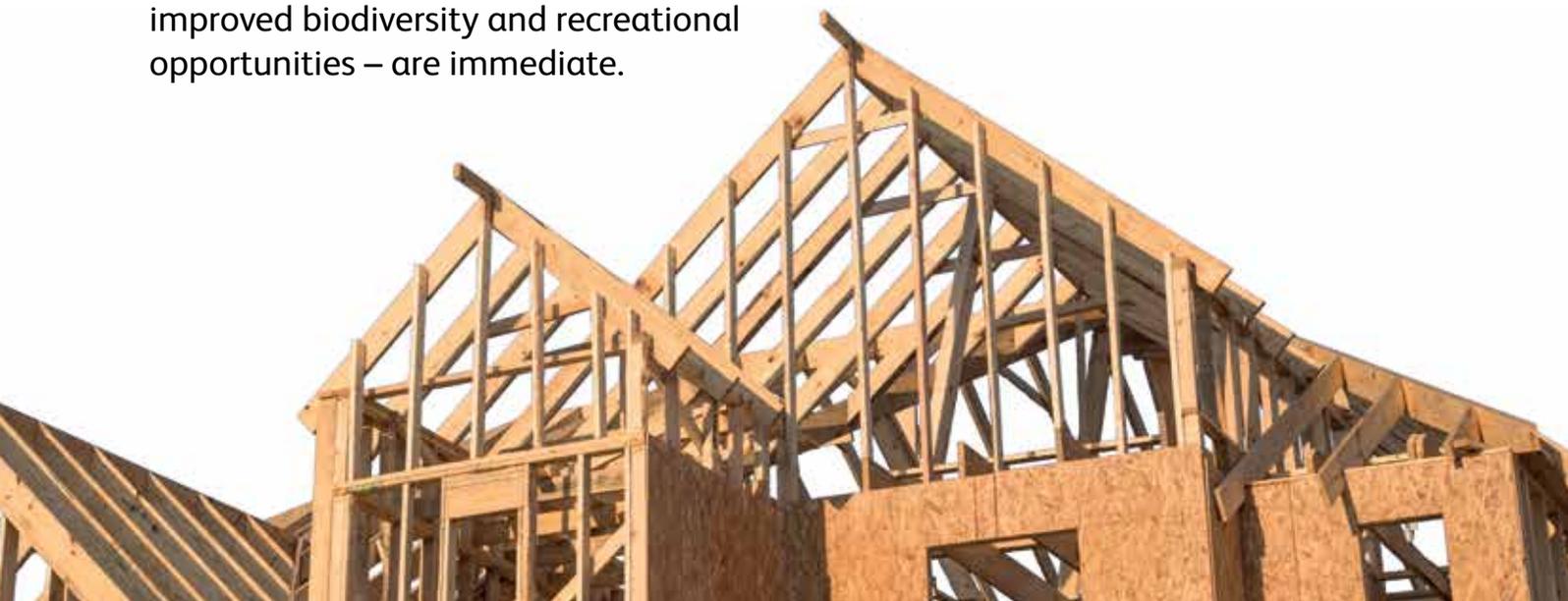
Britain imports 80% of the wood it uses (second only to China) and has a responsibility to grow more timber to reduce its global forest footprint.

By using more wood in buildings, carbon is locked up for longer. A cubic metre of wood contains about a tonne of carbon dioxide (depending on the species).

If the UK uses more wood, it will have further impact by replacing carbon-intensive materials like concrete, steel and plastic.

At the end of its life, wood can be recycled and re-used as biomass fuel, chipboard or in biochemical products.

The UK Government should set targets for home-grown timber use.



# The multiple benefits of modern forestry

If we **plant more trees, manage our woods better and use more home-grown wood**, we can make a real impact on the damaging effects of climate change AND deliver many additional benefits.

## GOOD FOR NATURE

The UK Forestry Standard ensures that creating forests delivers net benefit for wildlife – and there is compelling scientific evidence to demonstrate the positive benefits of productive forests for biodiversity in the UK.

Planting trees to high sustainability standards means that modern forests can deliver simultaneously for climate change and for biodiversity.

## GOOD FOR PLANT HEALTH

Planting more forests and using more home-grown wood will reduce imports in the long term – and have a positive benefit on plant health. Confor has called for imports of high-risk plants and firewood to be ended to safeguard the health of UK forests and protect our trees against pests and diseases.

## GOOD FOR THE ECONOMY

The UK forestry industry supports more than 80,000 jobs and adds £2 billion in value to the economy every year. Planting new forests creates local jobs in rural areas which have few large employers – and stimulates supply chains, from tree nurseries to wood processors. Tree planting also offers farmers the chance to diversify their businesses as part of a mixed land-use solution delivering public goods.

## GOOD FOR COMMUNITIES

As well as local jobs, forests can provide a wide range of recreational opportunities for local communities, including forest walks, cycling and bird-watching.





Confor is the voice of the UK forestry and wood-using industry, representing more than 1500 businesses all along the supply chain – from nurseries growing trees, through companies designing, planting and managing forests to sawmills and other businesses using wood.

Confor is always keen to collaborate with all those interested in forestry and wood, especially to look at joint solutions to realise the potential of forestry and wood to help tackle the #ClimateEmergency.

It produces regular documents and reports on all the main issues relating to the forestry and wood sector.

#### **Contacts**

Stuart Goodall, CEO  
[stuartg@confor.org.uk](mailto:stuartg@confor.org.uk)

Andrew Heald, Technical Director  
[andrew.heald@confor.org.uk](mailto:andrew.heald@confor.org.uk)

Eleanor Harris, Policy Researcher  
[eleanor@confor.org.uk](mailto:eleanor@confor.org.uk)

59 George Street, Edinburgh EH2 2JG  
[www.confor.org.uk](http://www.confor.org.uk)

Twitter: @forestsandwood