

FORESTRY & TIMBER NEWS

June 2022 Issue 111

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CHANGING ATTITUDES

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pathway to
net zero



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Tustins

WOODLAND FOR SALE



GREAT WOOD
Grittenham, near Brinkworth, Wiltshire
177.45 Acres / 71.81 Ha
Commercial conifers including Douglas fir and Norway spruce together with native broadleaves including good quality oak.
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Guide price, offers over: **£1,950,000**



DELCOMBE WOOD
Bulbarrow Hill, Milton Abbas, Dorset
203.06 Acres / 82.17 Ha
A woodland of much charm and solid forestry underpinnings. High percentage of commercial species.
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For the whole, offers over: **£1,800,000**



STONEHOUSE WOOD
Boxley, Maidstone, Kent
66.04 Acres / 26.73 Ha
An attractive, mainly deciduous, woodland with timber building and areas of Norway spruce, western hemlock, Scots pine and sweet chestnut coppice.
Guide price: Reduced to **£500,000**



ALLT HENGERAINT
Ciliau Aeron, Aberaeron, Ceredigion
45.79 Acres / 18.53 Ha
A restored ancient woodland on a valley side only two miles from the sea.
This leasehold tranquil woodland offers amenity benefits and timber harvesting.
Guide price: **£160,000**



CLIFTON HEATH WOODLAND
Clifton Hampden, near Abingdon, Oxon
91.21 Acres / 36.91 Ha
An interesting opportunity to acquire a high-quality managed forest in a rural location with easy reach of the city of Oxford.
Sporting included.
Guide price: **£1,100,000**



COED TY LLYS
Langynidr, Brecon, South Wales
29.92 Acres / 12.11 Ha
Set within the Brecon Beacons National Park on the side of a valley, this is a mixed woodland approaching its production phase.
Guide price: **£120,000**



THE KINGTHORPE WOODLANDS
Kingthorpe, Pickering, North Yorkshire
In all: 243.5 Acres / 9.5 Ha
A collection of four woodlands with a wide range of species and ages ranging from mature and maturing commercial crops and mixed broadleaves.
Guide prices: **£25,000 to £975,000**



HIGH MEADOW & CRAIGHILL
Skenfrith, near Monmouth, South Wales
175.06 Acres / 70.85 Ha
A highly productive woodland with a significant amount of harvestable Douglas fir along with mixed regenerating broadleaves.
Guide price: **£1,200,000**



WEDDICAR WOOD
Hensingham, Whitehaven, Cumbria
415.71 Acres / 168.23 Ha
This delightful wooded parkland landscape includes a 20-year commercial woodland, areas of young broadleaves as well as a river and lakes.
Guide price: **£1,500,000**



FINING WOOD
Lane End, High Wycombe, Bucks
63.62 Acres / 25.74 Ha
Within the Chilterns AONB, a mixed age principally broadleaved woodland in close proximity to London yet in a rural location.
Sporting included.
Guide price: **£600,000**



Mike Tustin
Forestry Investment Specialist



John Clegg
Forestry Expert & Agency Specialist



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Forestry Land Acquisition & Sales Advisor

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Planting for the future



STUART GOODALL
CHIEF EXECUTIVE,
CONFOR

By the time this issue of FTN hits your desk we should have an updated timber Production Forecast. This is much delayed, but still keenly anticipated.

Confor's *Changing Attitudes* media campaign for 2022 has started from the key point that we need to plant more productive woodlands now to avoid a damaging reduction in wood availability from the late 2030s onwards. As well as the negative impact this would have on investment and jobs in the industry, there will be ramifications for achieving net zero and for future UK wood supply as global demand is forecast to grow faster than global supply.

I haven't seen the update of course, but the expectation is that it will still show a future reduction in availability, though perhaps beginning a little later than previously forecast, effectively leaving us essentially in the same position. There is a need to act and to act quickly.

Many, though not all, politicians and groups with an interest in trees and forests understand and accept that declining future wood availability is a bad thing and that tackling it will require more productive planting, as well as perhaps the short-term

use of additional sources of material such as Short Rotation Forestry.

The question then becomes one of "how much new planting?" and just as importantly "where?"

Confor has already lined up Guy Watt of John Clegg & Co to undertake an update to the supply and demand reports that he has previously provided for Confor. However, I also want to provide governments and policy makers with an analysis of what planting – and where – would address the future shortfall in supply, in order to get much more focus on the problem and early action on solutions.

Statistical information and analysis such as this is vital for so many reasons. For example, to help businesses make investment decisions and plan for the future, to inform policy making that impacts on our sector, and to promote awareness and understanding of our industry.

Confor is also currently close to finalising work on the provision of new data that will show on a six-monthly basis, by region, what has been approved for harvesting in the coming years. In this way and in many others we want to help Members be successful in the months and years ahead.

Confor is a membership organisation that promotes sustainable forestry and wood-using businesses. Confor members receive *Forestry and Timber News* for free as part of their membership. For more information on membership, visit www.confor.org.uk/join-us. Past issues and articles can be accessed online at www.confor.org.uk/news/ftn-magazine

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INNOVATION



TAKING THE INITIATIVE: STEPS FORWARD ON DECARBONISING THE TIMBER SUPPLY CHAIN

As more and more industries lay out their plans to achieve 'net zero', **Stuart Goodall** looks at the work being done by Confor to establish the real impact of productive forestry and discover what opportunities lie along the way.

In our sector, we justifiably take pride in the key role trees and timber can play in achieving government targets for net zero. However, it's vital to also recognise that the impact of successfully meeting that goal will be an increased ask for businesses to reduce emissions within their own operations.

It won't be enough for us to point to the material we work with – wood – and expect a free pass.

Some sectors, including steel and concrete, have already taken the initiative to develop their own 'net zero roadmaps', and through these they will seek to take greater ownership of the pathway to net zero for their businesses.

“OTHER SECTORS HAVE ALREADY BEGUN TO PUBLISH ROADMAPS TO NET ZERO, INCLUDING UK CONCRETE AND BRITISH STEEL.”

Certain companies in the timber supply chain have also started to measure their emissions and plan ways to reduce them – but most are lagging behind. We've also seen the regulatory agencies begin to make carbon-related changes to the rules on tree planting, for example on peat depth and ploughing, and we can expect more such changes in future.

In response to these developments, Confor is looking at how our industry can take a leading role in assessing the carbon

emissions of the supply chain and develop a roadmap to net zero.

If we don't take a proactive role, others will undoubtedly seek to set the pathway for us.

We also want to address some of the practical issues that crop up around net zero. For example, stressing the real benefit of establishing a common framework for assessing and taking action to reduce and report on emissions.

Essentially, for those of you who remember the early days of video recorders, we want to ensure we collectively adopt the carbon equivalent of VHS as the industry standard, rather than Betamax.

The first step in our work has been to commission Eilidh Forster, who many of you will know from the research published last year in *Nature Communications* that examined how different types of forest would contribute to greenhouse gas mitigation. This work, which highlighted the particular carbon benefits of productive forestry, has been widely welcomed, shared and quoted across the sector.

Eilidh is currently completing her PhD and Confor has contracted her to work with a group of Members to assess the timber supply chain and seek to identify the carbon emissions from business activity.

This does not include the carbon impact of tree planting or wood use, but rather the

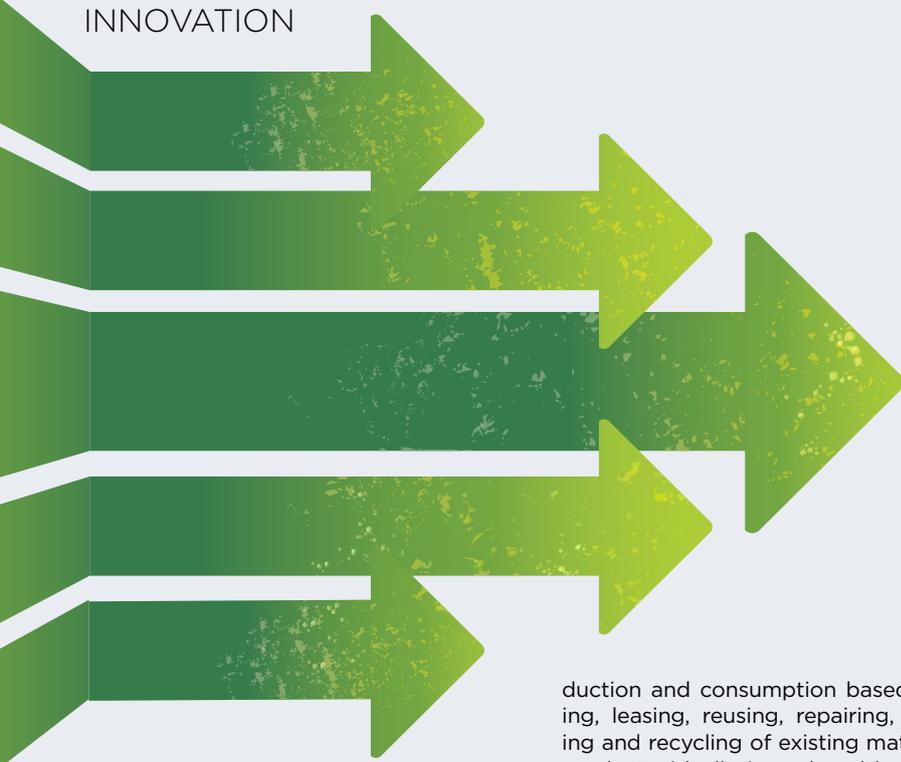
“NET ZERO EMISSIONS ARE ACHIEVED WHEN ANTHROPOGENIC EMISSIONS OF GREENHOUSE GASES TO THE ATMOSPHERE ARE BALANCED BY ANTHROPOGENIC REMOVALS OVER A SPECIFIED PERIOD.”

carbon emitted by businesses in the course of establishing, managing, and harvesting forests, and by the end-to-end processing of wood products. Eilidh will also provide some first ideas on where and how the sector could prioritise emission reductions.

Eilidh is taking a life-cycle assessment (LCA) approach to her work, which is widely recognised as the most rigorous approach to determining the real impact of different land use and product options on storing carbon, and thus reducing climate change impacts.

The principle of LCAs is to consider the direct and indirect impacts of a product or system through its entire life. To calculate the net carbon (CO₂e) impact of the existing forestry sector, greenhouse gas emissions for the re-planting, management and growth of existing forest will be calculated, along with the carbon emissions from the transport, processing, use and disposal of harvested timber.

Carbon emissions avoided due to using timber as a substitute for mineral-based
continued on p8



“THE ASSESSMENT WILL BE SHARED WITH CONFOR MEMBERS AS A STARTING POINT FOR DEVELOPING A SECTOR ROADMAP.”

continued from p7

construction products (like concrete and steel) and fossil fuels will also be assessed.

Eilidh will map the scale of what are categorised as Scope 1, 2 & 3 emissions and seek to understand how much control an organisation can have over them. The forestry and wood processing emissions calculated in the lifecycle assessment of the sector will be presented separately under these categories in order to provide a deeper understanding of where emissions are emanating in each sub-sector of the value chain and how they might be addressed.

Then, when developing a roadmap, the aim will be to innovate solutions for the easiest reductions first while a strategy is developed to tackle the more difficult ones.

Eilidh’s work will also examine the significance of the emerging political interest in developing a circular economy and its potential relevance to the forestry and wood processing sector.

A circular economy is a model of pro-

duction and consumption based on sharing, leasing, reusing, repairing, refurbishing and recycling of existing materials and products, ideally in a closed loop. It aims to retain the highest utility and value of products, components and materials at all times.

This ‘hierarchy of use’ is important for the forestry and wood processing sector, because it can lead to carbon being locked up out of the atmosphere for longer.

Achieving circularity in forestry and wood processing in the UK is also a potential means to respond to future strategic concerns about sourcing wood fibre. The world’s population is growing and with it the demand for timber.

Although timber is renewable, it is also finite and with the UK relying heavily on imports, the security of its supply could become increasingly vulnerable against the backdrop of rising domestic and global demand. The forecast of future wood availability in the UK shows a distinct falling away of domestic supply from as soon as the 2030s.

Collaboration will be key to implementing the roadmap as some emissions will be easier to abate than others, depending on the barriers faced: political, economic, social, technological, legal or environmental.

Confor is arranging briefing meetings for forestry ministers across the UK to present the key outputs from the report and to explore working together to deliver the final roadmap. We will also explore opportunities to work with the downstream sector in connecting the full timber supply chain to support circularity.

When the UK Government published its Net Zero Strategy on 19 October 2021, the Government was under pressure to strongly root the case for the Net Zero Strategy in the context of delivering more jobs, improving energy security, and creating economic opportunities across the country.

In our industry, we have the opportunity to lead and deliver on an economically positive net zero roadmap, and while that will require taking action to reduce business emissions, it’s a route that we will inevitably have to follow.

Better, then, that we play a leading role in defining what those actions will be, rather than waiting to see where another’s road may take us.

Confor is also a key participant in Timber Development UK’s efforts to establish a Net Zero Carbon Roadmap. Read more on page 25.

SCOPING OUT EMISSIONS

The Green House Gas Protocol (2001) introduced the categorisation of greenhouse gas emissions into ‘Scopes’, according to where they originate in relation to an organisation or activity. These Scopes are now the basis for mandatory greenhouse gas (GHG) reporting in the UK.

- **Scope 1:** GHG emissions that a company produces directly. For example, from burning diesel.
- **Scope 2:** GHG emissions it is responsible for producing indirectly due to use of (imported) electricity and heat.
- **Scope 3:** GHG emissions that a company is indirectly responsible for up and down stream in its value chain, including emissions from materials used in the company’s

operations and from its products when the customer uses them. For example:

- The manufacture of resins and fertilisers used by the company.
- The biogenic CO₂ emitted when wood is burned in biomass boilers.

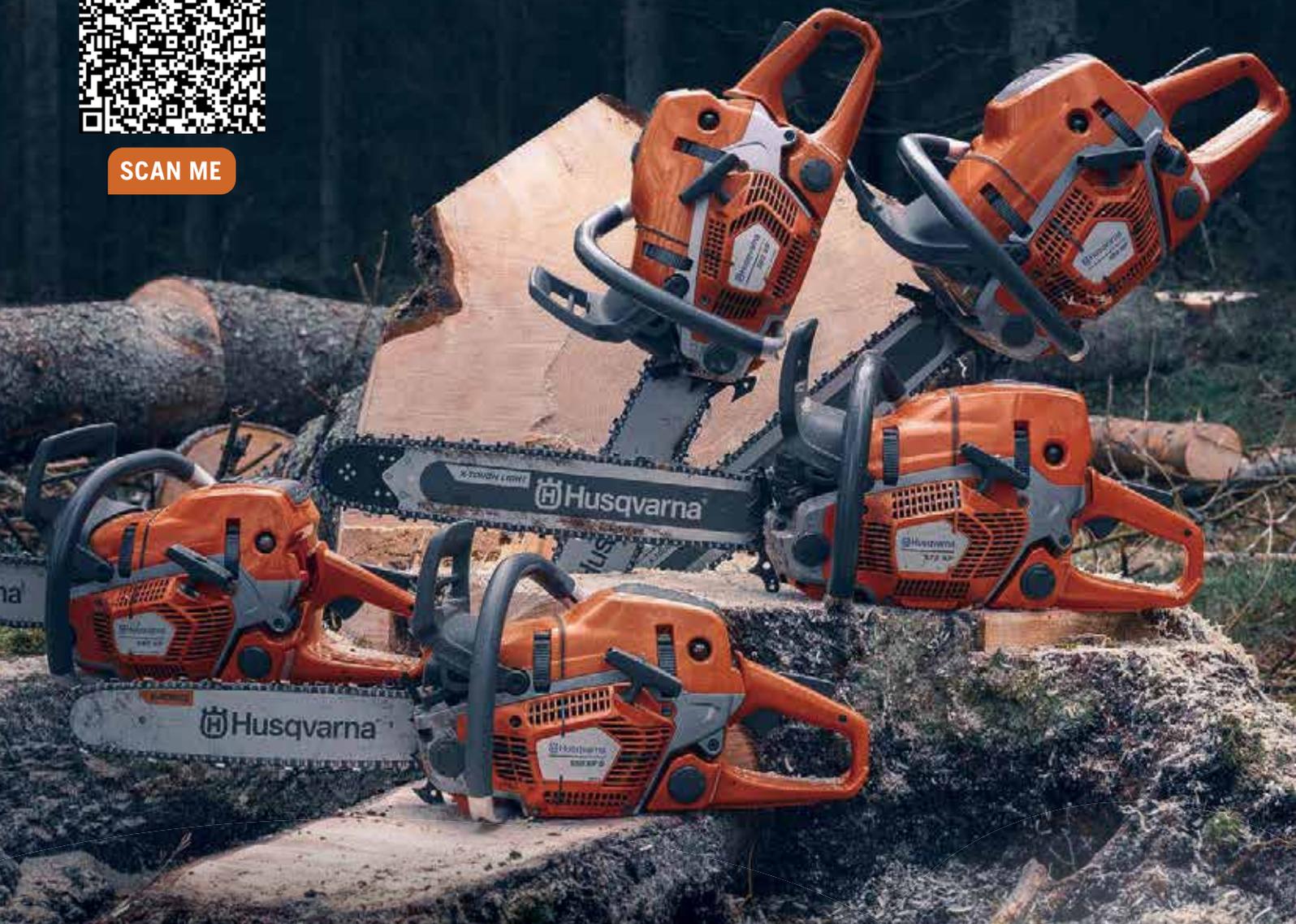
Scope 3 emissions are often where most of the impact is, and they can be the most challenging to mitigate.

- **Scope 4:** GHG emissions avoided due to the use of a product or service. For example, substituting structural timber for concrete and steel in construction avoids emissions from the manufacturing of the concrete and steel. (Scope 4 is a recently introduced concept.)

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WE MEET AGAIN: TACKLING ISSUES IN THE SECTOR FACE-TO-FACE

Confor continues work to raise the profile and influence of the forestry sector among politicians in Westminster, Cardiff, Edinburgh and Belfast, reports **Maria Bellissimo**.

The loss of red diesel for mills, delivering on tree planting targets, and environmental regulations continue to be the main focus of Confor's political engagement as we consider what they mean for the future of the forestry and wood processing industry.

Red diesel and the sector's carbon footprint

While we were able to successfully lobby for the retention of red diesel in forest management, the UK government has been un-

bending when it comes to manufacturing and other industries. We have continued to lobby DEFRA, the Treasury and HMRC about the negative impact the red diesel tax change is having on the sector's businesses and to seek mitigating measures.

It remains an uphill task, but we will exhaust every avenue and, recently, we were asked to prepare a fuller industry analysis.

Net zero is the driver behind the changes to red diesel and some of you will have been in touch with Eilidh Foster, the brilliant consultant who's researching the sector's

carbon footprint and how we can reduce it (see page 6). She is nearing the completion of her work and will be presenting her findings to Scottish Forestry Minister Màiri McAllan, and her English counterpart, Lord Goldsmith, in June.

Members will be consulted on the development of an industry roadmap to net zero.

New environmental targets for England

As many of you know (and as discussed in our last issue), forecasts predict a decline in timber availability from the 2030s; and to make matters worse, according to official figures we secured in England, productive woodlands are being removed much faster than they are being replaced.

These issues, together with obstacles to productive planting, have been the main focus of various meetings with politicians and civil servants. Two consultations (*Environmental Targets for the Environment Act* and *Nature Recovery Green Paper*) that closed in early May suggested the consolidation of a worrying trend in England to restrict productive woodland creation at a proposed 20% of the total trees planted.

We have submitted responses to these consultations (our thanks to all Members who sent comments and submitted their own responses) and discussed in many

continued on p13



Confor continues to lobby UK politicians in (clockwise above) Westminster; The Senedd, Wales; Holyrood, Scotland and Stormont, Northern Ireland on behalf of the forestry sector.

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Claims can be registered on-line from 1st February 2022 and must be registered within 28 days of purchase for qualifying models. Qualifying models must be purchased by 30th June 2022 to qualify and registered within 28 days.

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continued from p10

meetings with MPs and civil servants why this approach is extremely harmful to both the jobs in the sector and the UK's decarbonisation effort. Confor's National Manager for England, Caroline Ayre, raised these issues while giving evidence to the Land Use in England committee in the House of Lords; she really struck a chord with many Peers who later showed up at our All-Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) event in April.

We have further promoted the case for a more balanced split between native and productive tree planting in meetings with the Committee on Climate Change (CCC) and the National Farmers Union (NFU).

The CCC are compiling their regular report on progress towards net zero, in which tree planting plays a huge role. They shared our concern about the tree planting targets not being met in the timescales government has specified, and we hope they will acknowledge the role and importance of productive forests in their future publications.

The NFU were interested in the role tree planting can play in supporting farming in the future and very receptive to the argument for more collaboration between the two sectors moving forward. Next steps include further discussions with both NFU and CCC and a meeting with the Country Land and Business Association (CLA).

First in-person APPG event since COVID

At the end of April, the chair of the APPG for Forestry and Tree Planting, Ben Lake MP, hosted the first in-person event in Westminster for over two years, which was a great occasion to catch up with many of our Members in attendance.



Confor Chief Executive, Stuart Goodall, set the scene for the following speakers by sharing the worrying data about future timber supply and current productive planting rates. Lord Goldsmith, the Forestry Minister for England, acknowledged the challenges to meet tree planting targets that Stuart highlighted and the need to secure better timber supply in the future. The Minister stated: "That can and must change, and we need to be in a position where we can supply that wood and meet that demand."

We, of course, take this as an encouragement to keep pushing for more support for the sector - so watch this space.

The Forestry Commission's Chair, Sir William Worsley, and Chief Executive, Richard Stanford, contributed to a lively Q&A session where Members discussed the difficulties with planting applications, lack of clarity on wading bird guidance, and frustrations about the perceived lack of biodiversity benefit of productive woodland. We thank Sir William and Richard for their input and comments and are grateful to all our Members for attending and making such a successful event.

A call to Members

It helps us greatly when Members contact their local politicians and involve us in those communications.

In recent weeks we have established new contacts: Nick Fletcher, MP for the Don Valley who showed very positive interest in what the industry has to offer in relation to the Government's Levelling Up agenda, and Jerome Mayhew, MP for Broadland, visited TMA Bark for the first time.

Visits like these are the most effective way to raise awareness of the forestry and wood processing sector and the issues that businesses are facing with elected representatives. Even in areas where the sector has a strong presence, politicians are often unfamiliar with what we do, how much we contribute to the local economy, and what kind of support we need.

With the better weather on the way and Parliament's summer break coming up, we would like to encourage all members to get in touch with their local MPs, MSPs, Stormont Assembly Members, and Members of the Senedd and invite them out on site. Do get in touch if you would like our help.



SAVE THE DATE: CONFOR DINNER & AWARDS 2023

Following our hugely successful 2022 event, we are delighted to announce that the Confor Dinner and Awards will be held at Surgeons Quarter, Edinburgh on Tuesday 28 February 2023.

The evening is a chance to celebrate the work being done in the sector, meet your peers face-to-face, and recognise those individuals making their mark on the industry. Our awards dinner in March 2022 was the biggest we'd ever had, and we look forward to seeing even more Members attend and enjoy this next key date in the calendar.

Details on tickets and bookings will be released in the coming months.

NEW MEMBERS

A big welcome to our newest Confor members: **Fasque Timber Products Ltd, Fasque Estate Office, Mr Nyanzu Ackah, Mr Kingwell, Mr Grant, Mr Rampley, Mr Murray, Mr Maccoll, Mr A More, Mr Faddes, Mr Fettes, Mr Low, Mr Boler and Mr Skeath.**



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LAUNCH OF NEW UKFS PRACTICE GUIDE

Forest Research has recently released *Adapting forest and woodland management to the changing climate*, the latest official UK Forestry Standard (UKFS) Practice Guide.

Building on the information already supplied by UKFS, this publication provides an adaptation framework for forest and woodland owners, managers, planners and policymakers to structure their management

practices around the changing climate.

Several case studies of forests and woodlands that are currently implementing changes in line with the advice have also been provided as an additional resource. These are largely concentrated in southeast England, where the first effects of climate change are most apparent.

For example, two small climate change adaptation demonstration areas are lo-

cated at Jeskyns Community Woodland in Kent. The intention of the project is to highlight differences in the side-by-side growth of mixed broadleaves for the visiting public, with one area designated as 'Woodland Present', and the other as 'Woodland Future'.

The full guide is available from the Forest Research website in digital and hardcopy formats.



Andrew Sowerby MICFor speaking about modern forestry design

LOOKING FORWARD TO FORESTRY DAY

Anthony Geddes gives a preview of what's on at the Royal Welsh Agricultural Show 2022

The clock is ticking down the last few weeks to the Royal Welsh Agricultural Show 2022. We're pleased to say Confor will be back at the show with huge support and representation from the forestry sector.

The forestry industry expo space includes attendees for Bronwin & Abbey

Forestry, DSH Timber, Focus on Forestry First, Prior & Rickett, and Tubex, with confirmation from other firms eagerly anticipated. This will be a great opportunity for those businesses to represent professional forestry, meet members of the industry, and connect with farming and rural communities.

The last event in 2019 had a packed schedule of events, and we're aiming for an even more engaging show this



year. We will be joined by presenters from South Wales Fire and Rescue Service, Focus on Forestry First, Bronwin & Abbey, Gresham House and many more.

Tuesday 19 July is Forestry Day and we've got an insightful and engaging line up prepared for those planning to attend.

A full program of events will be communicated to Members and published on the Confor website prior to RWAS 2022.

FORESTRY DAY | TUESDAY 19 JULY

CONTRACTORS BREAKFAST

8.30am Confor Marquee

Speaker: DPJ Foundation

The DPJ Foundation is a Welsh mental health charity that supports those in agriculture and rural communities with mental health problems.

Writing this so soon after Mental Health Awareness Week highlights the importance of visibility for this issue. Suicide rates amongst Welsh men are at an all-time high and yet many people feel there is a taboo about talking. Join us, have a bite of breakfast and learn to become more aware. The support you can offer can change lives.

PANEL DISCUSSION

10.30am Confor Events Space

Topic: How do we enable the conversation about land use change?

Forestry and afforestation hit the headlines in 2021/22 though, alas, not for being brilliant at tackling climate change. Some of this sits in the hands of poor journalism and motivated

activists, but the forest industry isn't blameless. We need to become better communicators and listeners.

This panel discussion is the first step of that process. We will not be discussing the rights and wrongs of tree planting, investment or land use change, but looking at communication and delivery in the context of the Government Pledge to afforest 37,000ha. by 2030.

The aim is to start a positive discussion ahead of the next stage - a larger workshop to be held at the RWAS in early September.

FORESTERS LUNCH

12pm Confor Events Space

Topic: What does the future of forestry investment look like?

Sponsored by Tustin's
Wales is enjoying a renaissance in government funding for tree planting: £57 million over the next two years to be precise. The reality is that this will only deliver about a third of the targets

set out by the UK Climate Change Committee and backed by the Senedd.

We have invited author Robert Penn, part of the duo behind *Stump Up for Trees*, and Olly Hughes, Managing Director of Forestry at Gresham House, to share with us their thoughts on the future paths for supporting tree planting.

WOODLANDS COMPETITION 2022

3.30pm Confor Marquee

Presented by Ben Lake

For those interested in excellence in forestry, the RWAS cannot pass without the Woodland Awards. This stalwart event even managed to happen last year, despite Covid-19, with our judges taking time, care, and social distancing to ensure all entrants were visited.

We hope to have Ben Lake MP, Chair of the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Forestry and Tree Planting (Westminster) join us to bestow the prodigious awards.

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CHANGING ATTITUDES

Confor CEO **Stuart Goodall** shares an update on the 'Changing Attitudes' PR campaign and speaks to the need for a strong industry voice.

I have written many times about the importance of changing attitudes towards our sector. The misrepresentations of the industry that we see in the media and the widespread regurgitation of outdated, inaccurate assumptions about productive forestry and wood production are not just frustrating, but also damaging to the future of the sector.

While most of the negativity is focused on conifers and planting/managing land for wood production, I've also seen negative media emerging about large-scale new native woodland creation. The concerns seem to centre on charities, as well as wealthy individuals and businesses, buying land for environmental purposes but failing to consider the impact on local communities.

If governments across the UK are to deliver on their increasingly ambitious planting targets, then it will necessitate a significant increase in larger planting schemes, which will undoubtedly attract greater interest, not all of it positive.

In response, Confor is taking action with several strands of work, including the development of training for those forestry professionals who undertake stakeholder engagement, and preparing a resource

hub for Members to use when explaining why we plant new woodland and harvest forests. Complementing this is the 2022 'Changing Attitudes' campaign.

The launch of this project was motivated by reports from a number of Members that new planting, principally but not only productive, was being portrayed in mainstream media outlets as causing rural depopulation and loss of food production. Links were made to carbon by journalists, but generally the reasons for planting trees and the range of benefits that well designed new forests provide were ignored.

In essence, journalists have presented an artificial, 'boiled down' narrative of young farming families being pushed off the land and out of their communities, only to make way for trees planted by businesses and wealthy individuals that won't benefit local people.

Last autumn, the Confor Board established a task and finish group of Members to develop a PR campaign and an external PR consultant – Susan Brownlow – was engaged.

The campaign is focusing initially on putting forward a strong case for why the UK needs to plant more forests as a first step in communicating the benefits of

more modern productive forests (mixed and native). At the start of the year, we led with an article in the *i* newspaper that was then picked up by *The Times*, and I gave a live interview on Times Radio. We also had coverage in the *Yorkshire Post*, *Politics Home* and *BusinessNEWS*.

The story focused on the need to plant trees to avoid a future shortfall in the availability of home-grown wood. Using the government's production forecast, we explained that supplies of UK wood are set to fall from the late 2030s due to a lack



NEW NATIONAL MANAGER FOR SCOTLAND JOINS CONFOR

April Armstrong has filled the role left by Jamie Farquar following his well-earned retirement

April's background in research has provided her with a broad knowledge and understanding of the key issues facing the forestry sector in Scotland, and she is skilled in translating the implications of policy, research and management.

She joins from Forest Research, formerly as a Forest Pathologist and latterly working across the organisation as the Business Development Officer within the Chief Scientists team. April also worked as a diagnostician for the Tree Health Diagnostic Advisory Service, supporting enquirers from across the forestry sector, and conducted research into ash dieback, Phytophthora, and biosecurity.

April believes in the importance of horizon scanning and will be keeping abreast of issues both UK-wide and international

to enable her to proactively support the needs of Members across Scotland.

She said: "I began my career as a plant pathologist, working in agriculture before moving into tree health. I quickly realised that forestry had taken over as my leading passion and I am delighted to have been offered a role that embeds me in the heart of the sector.

"I'm proud to have gained the opportunity to represent Confor Members across Scotland. As part of my role, I will be immersing myself in both policy and politics alongside the dynamic team here at Confor. I encourage Members to get in touch if they have any requirements or any agenda items they would like to raise.

"I've already had the opportunity to

meet with many of our Members and I am grateful to have received such a warm welcome."

"The role of National Manager is a key one in Confor and I'm really pleased that we've been able to appoint someone of the calibre of April Armstrong. ", said Stuart Goodall, Confor Chief Executive. "There is a broad and challenging agenda of issues in each country and April will be working with colleagues in Confor to get up to speed on all of those.

"Forestry and wood processing have been a success story in Scotland, and we want to maintain the momentum - which I'm confident we will do with April playing a key role."





“THE CAMPAIGN IS FOCUSING INITIALLY ON PUTTING FORWARD A STRONG CASE FOR WHY THE UK NEEDS TO PLANT MORE FORESTS AS A FIRST STEP IN COMMUNICATING THE BENEFITS OF MORE MODERN PRODUCTIVE FORESTS (MIXED AND NATIVE).”

of new productive forests since the early 1990s.

However, we also pointed out that all is not lost and that action to include productive woodland as part of planting across the UK will help ensure future supplies of low-carbon wood, ultimately contributing to net zero, safeguarding rural jobs, and promoting biodiversity recovery. In the short term, this is likely to require supplementing with Short Rotation Forestry given the timescales we face.

Recently, we have focused our efforts on the construction and architectural media sphere, and articles have begun to appear in publications like Construction News and Architecture Magazine.

As the year progresses, we will continue to present the story of the broader benefits of forestry, supplying a narrative linked to biodiversity and green jobs and highlighting carbon impact against the backdrop of COP27.

Our aim is to see unprecedented media coverage of the sector, its benefits and its needs by the end of the year. We will keep our Members updated on our progress and hope to see you engage positively with our campaign.

Read the latest ‘Changing Attitudes’ article on page 42.

CONFOR RECRUITS NEW COMMUNICATIONS MANAGER

Content specialist **Eleanor O’Neill** has joined the team at Confor as Communications Manager

Eleanor is an experienced content creator, communicator and marketing professional, having most recently worked with Edinburgh Napier University’s Marketing and External Relations department to support student recruitment campaigns.

Eleanor started her career in journalism, working as a freelance writer while studying for her degree and later producing notable articles for publications in the accountancy and finance sector.

She is well-versed in online content, from website management to social media, and has written for audiences on a global scale. She has also worked with a membership organisation before and spent several years at the Institute of Char-

tered Accountants of Scotland (ICAS), contributing to member communications and producing digital assets.

A strong voice

“I’m delighted to have been offered this opportunity at Confor,” she said. “I’ve already had the pleasure to meet several of our Members and I look forward to sharing their stories across our channels and beyond.

“There’s fantastic work being done to raise the organisation’s public profile, and I hope to bring my skills to the table with a new perspective. Confor is a strong voice for our membership, and for the sector as a whole - I want to strengthen that position and bring atten-

tion to all the positive impact the industry has.

“Every day so far has brought something new to learn and I’m excited to carry that momentum forward into the future.”

Confor Chief Executive, Stuart Goodall, commented: “Communicating the positive story of modern forestry and the greater use of wood is increasingly important, and therefore I’m really pleased to welcome Eleanor to the Confor team.

“We’ll be looking for her to integrate and update our communications to Members, the sector and beyond. There’s much to do and I’m confident that Eleanor will be a valuable addition to the organisation.”

Eleanor has also taken over as Editor of the Forestry & Timber News. See page 68 for more.



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Digging into the data of felling figures

Richard Hunter reports on the progress of the Forestry Statistics Working Group.

The forest statistics we have traditionally used have been produced and released by Forest Research and authenticated by the Office for National Statistics (ONS). However, it has been felt for some time that the official data did not cover everything the industry needed.

Confor formed the Forestry Statistics Working Group to look at these gaps in knowledge and pull together a singular, accessible resource for the sector.

The intention behind much of the work is to build upon existing public data and dig deeper into what is missing, while managing constraints such as confidentiality. Data may be provided on a commercially confidential basis and the privacy of private woodland owner information needs to be respected.

Further, some of the publicly available figures sit in isolation and are created for users other than the forest industry, meaning that though the information is avail-

able, it may not be useful to woodland owners and businesses when forward-planning. It was also recognised that many organisations carry out their own statistical analyses and would potentially prefer to keep the work in house.

However, with that in mind, the Group has begun tackling these issues and a series of questions were posed to Forest Research as a starting point:

1. What is the short-term availability of round wood in 0-10 years?
2. How much of this available timber is being felled and at what rates?

To answer these questions, Forest Research produced a methodology to compare woodland loss against the licences for felling issued by Scottish Forestry in a pilot area of southwest Scotland. The focus was on softwood, and broadleaves were excluded from the data at the outset.

The licences used to determine a total amount of fellable area included felling

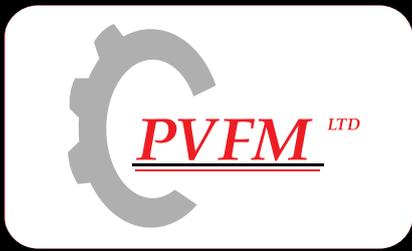
permissions and long-term forest plans. To achieve an accurate figure, Statutory Plant Health Notices were excluded as that data set was not updated regularly enough. However, it is likely these areas would have been picked up under the resultant felling licences.

During the pilot phase, it was noted that long-term forest plans may change, and updates are generally made to the database retrospectively, so this could have a negative impact on the result.

Once a figure of expected woodland loss was generated, this was compared against Forest Research's woodland loss algorithm, which compares images taken by the Sentinel satellites. Forest Research access these via the Defra Earth Observation Data Service (EODS).

Sentinel satellites cross the UK every 3-5 days and are constantly taking images. Good quality imagery is cloudless so often

continued on p21



Paul Vidgen

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continued from p19

it can take many passes of the satellite to get the level of image required.

Once the pilot area was run and showed that it could produce accurate results, the Group gave Forest Research the green light to use the same approach to the whole of Scotland. Again, the methodology proved sound and a strong set of results were produced.

Forest Research has now been asked to extend the exercise to include England (encompassing hardwood as well as softwood) and then move on to Wales. The data will be produced every six months and after around two years of results, Confor will review the value of the data with Members to assess the cost of continued reporting.

Other planned work includes commissioning Guy Watt of John Clegg & Co to produce an updated wood supply and demand report based on the latest softwood production forecast. The Group will undertake a gap analysis to determine what statistical information is not currently available that businesses would wish to have produced. The results of this gap analysis will be presented to the Confor Board for a discussion on what level of resource Confor should and is able to provide to Members.



THE FORESTRY STATISTICS WORKING GROUP WAS FORMED TO:

- Analyse gaps in the current provision, restocking levels, and the potential impact on productive forest planting from proposed changes to the Woodland Carbon Code.
- Interrogate existing data and add value while providing an easy to access and read version for the industry.
- Supply strong data for Government lobbying with accurate and up-to-date figures.
- Provide a single source of information for Members.
- Raise the importance of statistical work by forestry authorities and address the private sector capacity to process and interrogate public data.



Putting forward a plan for Northern Ireland

Confor will press for a new Forestry Strategy to unlock the wide-ranging economic and environmental benefits of tree planting in Northern Ireland, writes **David Lee**.

The last Strategy was written in 2006 and does not mention climate change - a new one could deliver cross-party support for enhanced tree planting and wood use in Northern Ireland, in the same way that a 10-year strategy has done in Scotland.

Confor put the new Forestry Strategy at the heart of its election manifesto ahead of May's Assembly election. The other four key points in *The Future is Forestry: A Manifesto for Trees and Timber in Northern Ireland* were:

- Hit tree planting targets (of a modest 900 hectares a year). Currently, just 200-300 hectares are being planted annually;
- Promote the benefits of tree planting as a viable land use option to be considered as part of a diverse rural business;
- Ensure the application and approval processes for tree planting are working;
- Promote greater wood use.

The manifesto has already received media coverage from BBC Northern Ireland and the Belfast Telegraph. The BBC interviewed Confor Chief Executive Stuart Goodall for the piece, as well as two Confor members who are among the case studies in the manifesto - RJ Woodland Services Ltd and wood processor Balcas, which em-

ploy more than 370 people near Enniskillen.

Ross Jamieson, Director of RJWS, said in the manifesto: "Forestry is not promoted strongly enough as a land use option. There is little linkage between planting trees, using wood and climate change."

Nigel Manley, Supply Manager at Balcas Timber Ltd, stated: "The application and approval process is too complex and difficult. Many applicants drop out before planting a single tree. For those who stick with it, the process takes far too long."

James Hamilton Stubber, Confor Chair in Northern Ireland, said the case studies presented in the manifesto "demonstrate why elected representatives must seize this opportunity and develop a clear strategy". He added: "Collaboration between the departments delivering it is crucial."

Andy Leitch, Deputy Chief Executive of Confor, said: "There is huge economic and environmental potential for forestry in Northern Ireland, and a new strategy can be the catalyst to unlock that potential."

"Confor and its members will be pressing politicians of all sides to take the manifesto action plan forward as an exciting blueprint for forestry and wood processing in Northern Ireland."

FROM HAULAGE TO

Maria Bellissimo reports back on her visit to TMA Bark

I visited TMA Bark, an independent family-owned business based in Norfolk, on a beautiful April day. If I had any worries about finding my way to the Weston Longville site on my first ever visit to Norfolk, I shouldn't have: for the last 15 miles or so, I was accompanied by several trucks displaying the TMA Bark logo, showing I was on the right track.

The original plan for the day had been for the company to host a visit by their local MP to discuss the business and the impact of changes to the red diesel tax rebate. However, only hours before he was due to arrive, the MP tested positive for Covid-19 and his visit had to be rescheduled. Although disappointing, the change of plans gave me the opportunity to spend some time with Operations Director Shane Andrews, who runs the business with his father Graham and mother Teresa, and talk about the work they do at their site near Norwich.

Shane explained that Graham and Teresa founded the company as a transport/haulage business; in 1991, they started processing the bark and woodchips their trucks were transporting into the high-quality products for which they are known in the landscaping and horticulture sector. TMA Bark now works with some of the biggest names in the UK's horticulture and gardening supplies sector; from 2002,

the company also started providing green waste recycling and composting services to local authorities and a variety of contractors.

When I asked about how they did it, Shane's passion for the business was palpable: "We have always made listening to customers our priority and this has allowed us not only to provide great service, but also to understand where there were opportunities in the market.

"Commitment to our customers has helped us understand what they needed, what they couldn't find, and what we could start supplying. After starting as a haulage business, we now produce 500,000m³ of high-quality bark and growing products. Our range consists of over 20 different products, from high end decorative garden barks and play area surfaces, to specialist blends for professional growing substrates.

"Thanks to our relationships with our customers and our focus on providing the best service, we continue to innovate and are always thinking about what we can do next."

When I told Shane about all the TMA Bark vehicles that in a way escorted me to the site, he explained. "We operate our own dedicated transport. We currently have nine walking floor articulated vehicles and one walking floor rigid vehicle. In this way, we can collect the raw materials we need

from all our suppliers, and we also deliver the finished products to our customers nationwide.

"Between the transport and the processing work here at the site, we employ 27 members of staff. Two of them have been with the company for over 15 years and another three for over 10. Every single one of our employees is a key part of our success and motivation to keep doing our best."

As we walked around the yard, among heaps and heaps of bark mixtures, I wondered about their supply and whether the horrific war in Ukraine and its wider market implications had any effect on the business. Shane told me that they work with different companies across the UK to source the raw materials but, as demand for landscaping and horticulture products soars, they need to import pine bark from abroad too.

He added: "We pay a lot of attention to the quality of the raw materials and always make sure that we import what we cannot find in the UK from pest-free and disease-free countries."

I was keen to know about the work TMA Bark does for local authorities in the area, which Shane had mentioned earlier; it's an interesting way to diversify the business and I wanted to know how it was working out.

"We operate an organic waste recycling facility. We currently process approximate-



HORTICULTURE

ly 25,500 tonnes of organic garden waste per annum, of which 93% is from local authority garden waste collection schemes, with the rest coming from private contractors. We saw it as an opportunity to add to the range of products we offer.

“The waste is recycled to produce high quality PAS100 certified composts, which are largely used in horticulture as a peat-free substitute.” Shane continued. “Peat-free and fertiliser-free mixes for professional growers are the next big thing. As we all become more carbon- and environment-conscious, eliminating the use of peat and still producing great growing products is the future of the sector. This is why we are developing new products, testing different mixes and working closely with our largest customers.”

When I asked what goes in the heap that he’d just shown me, Shane laughed and said it’s a “secret recipe”.

Our walk around the site ended by a big structure: a purpose-built barn. There were no secrets here as Shane was very happy to explain what it was. “Years ago, we developed a heat treatment method that would allow us to process diseased raw bark and that was fully approved by the Forestry Commission.

“Until recently, we were outsourcing the heat treatment and only processing small quantities at a time. Now, we’re in the last

stages of the process of installing a new system that will allow us to deal with much larger volumes of diseased raw bark on site. We believe this will also open up some opportunities to export these products.

“Climate change sadly means more plant health issues; it is important to think of ways in which we can reduce the risk and spread of these diseases and still make good use of this precious resource.”



Shane Andrews is carrying on the family business at TMA Bark





Sustainable timber is, at its heart, a low-carbon commodity and a carbon capture and storage solution. As an industry, this fact has likely caused us to rest on our laurels – but we can, and must, do better, writes **Charlie Law**

Timber Development UK has brought together all members of the supply chain to develop a Net Zero Carbon Roadmap.

The strong moral imperative of responding to climate change has been joined in recent years by powerful social, political, and business movements. This includes a commitment in the UK, enshrined in law, to reduce carbon emissions by 78% compared to 1990 levels by 2035 – joining the UK Government’s legal target to reach net zero carbon emissions by 2050.

Market actors and associations have been responding to these legal targets with an intense flurry of paperwork, creating roadmaps for how they can place their industries on a sustainable footing to meet these goals. While you would be right to highlight the frailty of some of these plans, where the very industries responsible for global emissions cite unproven technologies as the keys to propping up their carbon-intensive activities, they are important.

As the famous adage oft credited to Benjamin Franklin goes: “If you fail to plan, you are planning to fail”. If the timber supply chain is to achieve the net zero targets set out by Government, we need to plan carefully now. This is why, over the past six months, we have been working to unite the timber supply chain from forestry through to manufacturing, merchants and distribution.

We have brought together a partner-

ship across all the trade associations that work in the timber supply chain, including Confor alongside the likes of the Structural Timber Association, Trussed Rafter Association, British Woodworking Federation, and Wood Protection Association.

This is a multibillion network of thousands of businesses – from the very big, to the very small.

Through this network, we are now setting out to understand the carbon footprint of the products and services we collectively offer as an industry. This is important, with the very first step of building the Net-Zero Carbon Roadmap being to scope out the industry’s emissions profile. We need to understand where our material carbon emissions sit.

We know that timber itself is inherently low-carbon, but what about our processing, our kilning, our transport – how can these be improved?

Once we have done this, we can move onto the next step: identifying opportunities for decarbonisation. This will include determining how carbon can be reduced for particular activities, impact reduction scenarios, residual emission pathways such as offsetting, and sector guidance for reductions.

At the end of this process, we will have a public-facing net zero carbon roadmap and a user toolkit to support the industry in reducing their carbon emissions. This may include carbon calculator tools, op-

portunity checklists, action plan templates, and company net-zero pathway templates to help place us, both individually and collectively, on a path to net zero.

This is essential, not just for the environment, but for business. From large financial institutions seeking to embed their ESG commitments, to politicians seeking to take action on their constituents’ concerns, and through to individual consumers choosing to vote with their wallet, the demand to show action on climate change is – much like the temperature – going to increase.

We can no longer solely rely on the timber itself; we must show what else we are doing as businesses and as a sector.

By understanding our carbon footprint, we can start to target the key areas of carbon intensity and bring these down in line with our 2050 target. Many of the pieces are already in place, the partners driving forward this roadmap are almost ready to move ahead, and now we need your help.

Keep an eye on your inbox in coming weeks for a survey from Confor (or your trade association) seeking to understand where emissions might occur in your business. We look forward to working with you all on this journey to net zero, and demonstrating that timber is the ultimate, low-carbon solution for creating a modern, circular economy.

Charlie Law, Sustainability Director, Timber Development UK



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MySafety: The role of structured data in safety culture enhancements

The latest version of MySafety – the UK's leading forest safety app – recently completed trials with Bolf-racks Estate and has once again delivered beyond expectations. As well as producing a comprehensive site safety record, detailing the sharing of site documents, control measures, reports and daily checks on the job, it was evident that MySafety's communication channel both enriched the full job safety record and facilitated access to essential operational information for all stakeholders.

Changing safety culture is not easy. MySafety has already created effective terminology and data structures, but these still need to be accepted by the industry. Without an agreed data standard, it will be impossible to reap the full benefits of technology's proactive potential.

In harvesting, this has already been achieved with the widespread adoption of Skogforsk's Standard for Forest machine Data and Communication (StanForD). Led by the Swedish institute for over twenty years, manufacturers and forest enterprises have collaborated on the de facto standard for forest machines (harvesters, forwarders etc) to control the reporting and monitoring of logging production.

More recently, in British Columbia, the Forest Safety Council (BCFSC) also recognised the need for data conformity, and

again their approach has been collaborative. BCFSC is only in the discovery phase of its project, with the aim of establishing what is actually needed – just as the team and trialists at MySafety have already done here in the UK.

Currently, a working group is establishing a prototype app to handle manually captured safety data and once accepted, it will be offered at no charge to the members of BCFSC. Again, as with StanForD, levy funding has been core to this development.

Another challenge for the forestry industry is the embedded reliance on Hienrich's approach to safety, which dates back to his research in the 1930s. In essence, Hienrich assumed that individuals are the cause of most safety incidents and therefore incidents can be avoided with proper training. However, more recent studies by W. Edwards Deming and Professor James Reason highlight that the root causes of incidents are often found in the underlying operational systems, and not the individual workers. It is therefore of utmost importance for the UK forestry industry to capture adequate data to establish whether safety incidents result from system failures or other causes.

Transparency and openness are essential to achieving both the continuous improvements described by Edwards

Deming, and the fair culture advocated by Reason. Unfortunately, it's widely acknowledged that the level of reporting is extremely low, despite FISA's Guidance on Managing Health & Safety in Forestry clearly allocating reporting responsibilities for unsafe practices or occurrences.

Without high levels of open data and transparent reporting, people within the industry often feel judged and fearful that sharing information will impact upon them commercially. Consequently, near misses are rarely reported at all and those important opportunities to learn and improve are lost.

The MySafety project was established to facilitate incident and near miss reporting, and it now offers much more. Namely, our agile development approach has yielded an effective operational communication channel.

While that technical success alone is not sufficient to drive cultural change, perhaps some of the expectations enshrined in the latest Occupational Safety and Health guidance (ISO 45001) and the UN's Sustainable Development Goals will ensure the industry embraces even better safety processes.

Alongside the recognition that investment in sustainable forestry is essential, it is equally important that the industry's safety management systems and data structures evolve in a way which reflects the true value of our forests and those working in them.

Get Involved The continued development of the MySafety project is vital to improving forest safety. If you would like to get involved, please contact either Stephen Bartlett or Colin Mann at mysafety@invigilatis.com.

MYSAFETY: FEATURES AND BENEFITS

Features

- Site-specific safety checks
- Control measures
- Reporting - incidents, access, competency
- Signage checks
- Environment checks
- Machine checks
- Document management
- Guidance
- Messaging and alerts
- Emergency support
- Tracking

Benefits

Operators – improved safety

- easy reporting for unsafe practices and occurrences
- a single repository for certificates and competencies

Contractors – simplified admin and comprehensive job safety audit records

- easy immediate awareness of team issues
- immediate visibility of information from all teams
- one source for all operators' certificates and competencies

FWMs – easier communication and comprehensive site safety audit records

- immediate awareness of site issues
- visibility of operations on all sites
- one source for all contractor's certificates and competencies

Owners

- improved operational awareness

Industry

- improved awareness of safety
- enhanced safety culture
- lower levels of incidents with injury and fatality potential





Resilience a hot topic at ICF Conference 2022

Richard Hunter reports on the highlights of this year's event.

Recently, Glasgow played host to the Institute of Chartered Foresters (ICF) Conference 2022. The title and theme of the event - 'Climate Smart Forestry' - was evident throughout. Chaired by Dr Rebecca Heaton, the two days were packed with information, views and opinions that prompted many conversations from attendees both in person and online, tuning in across the country.

Máiri McAllan MSP kicked off proceedings as the opening speaker. Though a relative newcomer to the world of forestry, her speech showed a good understanding of the issues facing the sector and it was heartening to hear that forestry is at the forefront of Scottish Government's response to climate change.

Attendees also heard from Chris Stark, Chief Executive of UK Climate Change Committee, who highlighted how forestry has come to the fore in so many ways - but there is still more we can do to support the net zero aim.

The key takeaway from both was that forestry is being spoken about in ways it hasn't been for a considerable time (living memory even). The sector is regarded as a vital part of the UK's future survival, not in terms of pit props for the war effort, but for the survival of the human race if we don't halt climate change.

From this, we as a forest industry, need to be able to blend and weave all the benefits of woodland management into a cohesive deliverable mechanism.

The conference was split into sessions, each with its own distinct theme and three speakers on each topic, followed by a Q&A and covering subjects like 'The Why', 'The Site' and 'Species'. There were some lively moments as differing opinions were voiced by speakers and the audience both.

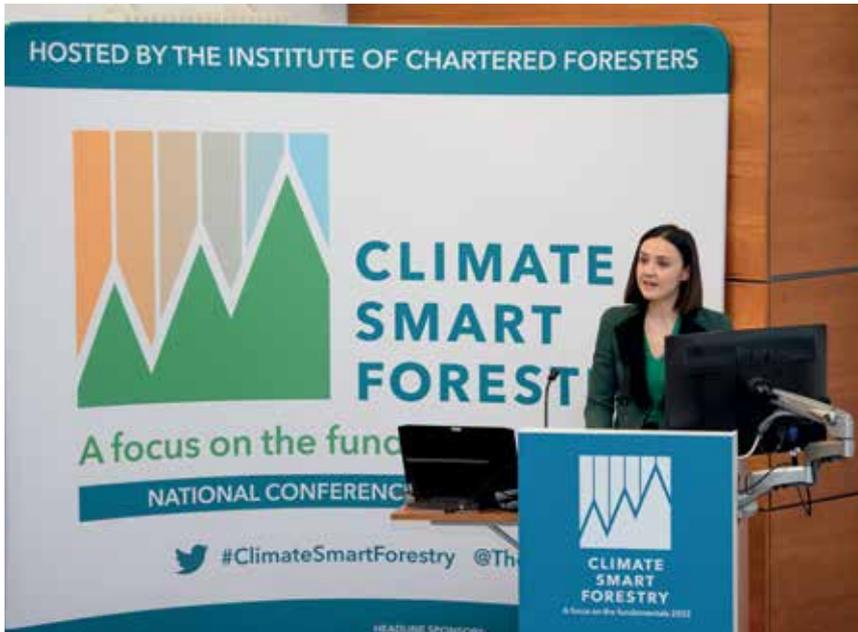
The question of which species to plant was raised in many of the talks as a means of improving woodland resilience. This is not a new debate among foresters, and the Forestry Commission has research records

dating back decades on what grows in the UK, but it is now something all woodland creators should be considering.

On a slightly different theme, Stephen Briggs, Director of Abacus Agricultural talked about one version of agroforestry: arable crop and fruit tree strips. His model was based on methods used in France, where a line of fruit trees (in this case apples) was planted with a 3m wide buffer on both sides. A 27m section of ploughable field was left and the process repeated.

The main outcomes of this style were the young trees producing deeper roots to avoid the plough, and the output from the field increasing as it produced two high yielding crops rather than one. The management of the two crops didn't conflict and used different below and above ground space. The biodiversity of insects also increased and reduced the need for chemicals.

This method may not solve timber supply issues in the UK, but it has other mer-



Confor joins signatories to Plant Health Accord

The Public Engagement in Plant Health Accord seeks to educate the public on responsible plant, seed and tree ownership, as well as raising awareness for pests, diseases and invasive species.

Confor is one of 29 organisations participating in the new agreement.

Lord Benyon, Minister for Biosecurity, said: "This Accord will change the face of plant biosecurity in this country, with leading organisations from across society setting out a long-term shared vision for public engagement, awareness raising and behavioural change."

"Safeguarding the health of our plants and trees will require people, the Government and partners to work together as we strive to deliver on our ambitious tree planting targets and leave the environment in a better state than we found it, as outlined in our 25 Year Environment Plan."

Commitment

In signing the Accord, Confor has committed to work closely alongside leading nature charities, trade bodies and the UK Government to:

- Help people understand the origin of the plants, trees and seeds they buy, as well as the plant health practices and credentials of vendors/suppliers.
- Reduce the risk of international travels bringing home plants, trees, fruit and seeds from overseas.
- Communicate how everyone's actions can facilitate the movement of pests and diseases.
- Ensure everyone knows how to report sightings of pests and diseases that are threatening the health of our plants and trees.

Climate change and the increasingly globalised plant trade continue to present immediate and emerging threats to our biosecurity from pests and diseases. If introduced to the UK, pests and pathogens can cause serious and lasting harm to our biodiversity, farmlands, ecosystems and native species.

Promoting positive behavioural change through public engagement is therefore necessary to safeguard the benefits trees and plants provide for society, the environment and the economy.

"IN ORDER TO MAXIMISE OUR WOODLANDS, WE NEED TO NOT ONLY CONSIDER THE SPECIES, BUT ALSO THE GENETIC MAKEUP OF THAT SPECIES."

its. When asked why other farmers are not following suit, the obvious answer was the lack of skills and knowledge to make it happen. Question, do we need to start training agroforesters? Other reasons included the lack of grant support, restrictions on tenanted farmers, and general scepticism. Each of these elements are now being explored with the backing of Defra.

In order to maximise our woodlands, we need to not only consider the species, but also the genetic makeup of that species. The second day saw talks covering the plant and seed supply from Forestry England and the Future Trees Trust. One speaker suggested a different approach:

letting evolution take its course and therefore losing the trees that don't cope with climate change, while preserving the ones that can.

This is a long term answer, but the question is if we have that amount of time?

Finally, Harry Stevens, BSW Timber Buying Director, asked us all to remember that our timber system is based on Sitka Spruce, and we must continue to produce what the end user wants. When the DIY chains are happy to accept large volumes of non-whitewood, the industry will meet that demand but many of the fantastic other species discussed at the conference are currently ruled out by the market.

Underlying themes that most speakers touched on included the impact of pests (deer, grey squirrels, Ips typographus and Phytosphthora pluvialis) and the need for new people to enter the industry with the right training and skills.

All in all, the event was a success. The speakers imparted knowledge, created talking points, delegates were happy to attend in person, and above all it created a sense that forestry can change the world.

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Nine speakers covered a range of weevil related topics at this year's event.

Investigating the weevil problem

Richard Hunter shares what happened at the Hylobius Industry Research Partnership Conference 2022.

Hyllobius, a major pest that forestry has been facing for many years. The Hylobius Industry Research Partnership (HIRP) Conference 2022 was an opportunity to hear just how much time, effort and research has gone into dealing with the weevil so far and how much more we need to do.

The UK is considered to have one of the highest densities of *H. abietis* in Europe, and the impact of the population is easily seen on restock sites, with multiple insects feasting on each plant. We need to maintain techniques which enable us to continue to manage Hylobius effectively, particularly in the light of the Government's ambitious targets for woodland creation and the growing call for UK timber in construction.

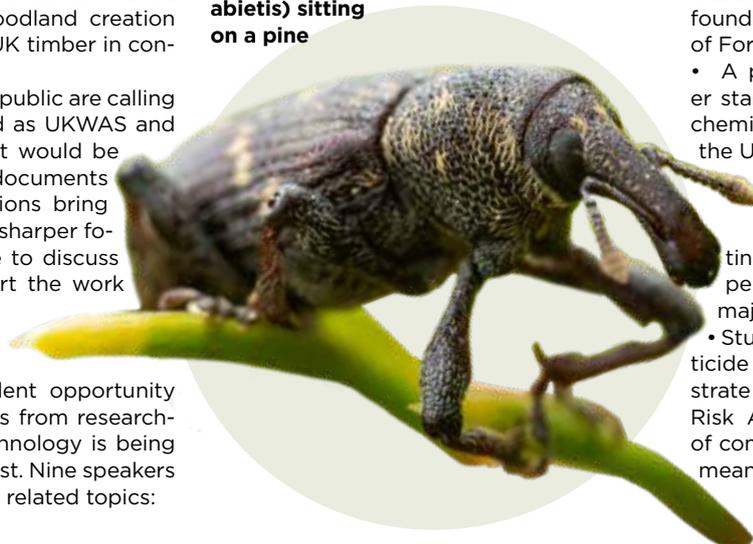
Both foresters and the public are calling for less pesticide use and as UKWAS and UKFS undergo revision, it would be no surprise to see both documents reflect this. The implications bring the HIRP conference into sharper focus, not just as a chance to discuss new ideas, but to support the work and ensure it continues.

Latest updates

The event was an excellent opportunity to hear the latest updates from researchers and how modern technology is being brought to bear on the pest. Nine speakers covered a range of weevil related topics:

- The new Hylobius Integrated Pest Management (IPM) Guide was published in February 2022. Dr Ian Willoughby gave a brief overview of its contents, including a range of possible actions, from both natural and man-made products to physical barriers and silvicultural systems. UKWAS refers to IPM and this guide will be invaluable.
- Katy Dainton delivered a breakdown of the current research priorities at Forest Research, along with the indicative cost of

Large pine weevil (*Hylobius abietis*) sitting on a pine



each. It will come as no surprise that some projects may span 10 years or more and it's important to secure funding to them through to completion.

- Maelor Weevil Trials were carried out across 16 sites across Scotland, Northern England and Wales, in conjunction with Tilhill, Forest Research and Scottish Woodlands. Using over 50 combinations of chemical and non-chemical approaches, some results indicated the entomopathogenic biological control agent *Metarhizium anisopiae* provided poor levels of protection when used against medium to high population levels, as did the Neem extracts. The full research paper can be found in *Forestry: An International Journal of Forest Research*.

- A pesticides update from Colin Palmer started with a description of how new chemical products gain approval for use in the UK. However, as the forestry sector in the UK is a very small user of pesticides, licence holders renewing due to Brexit may decide that continuing authorisation isn't worth the expense. This could potentially affect the majority of chemicals used in industry.

- Stuart Wilkie reported on the FSC Pesticide Policy. To comply, you must demonstrate IPM and Environmental and Social Risk Assessment (ESRA). The ESRA list of controls directly refers to the HIRP as a means of showing compliance.

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NEW URBAN TREE MANAGEMENT CERTIFICATION PILOTED IN SHEFFIELD

Sheffield Council has become the first local authority to be certified for the sustainable management of Trees Outside Forests (TOF).

Until recently, only forests and woodlands could be assessed under the UK Woodland Assurance Standard (UKWAS) as a mark of compliance. However, the Programme for the Endorsement of Forest Certification (PEFC UK) have now published an appendix to UKWAS that allows TOF to also be certified.

PEFC UK worked with the Sheffield Tree Partnership for 18 months to develop the new criteria.

Alun Watkins, PEFC UK Executive Director, said: "We are delighted that Sheffield has become the first city in Europe to be audited against our new TOF criteria. Their participation will help us fine tune the standard, before it is submitted to PEFC International later this year for endorsement."

NEW GB REGISTRATION REQUIREMENT FOR ALL PESTICIDE USERS

June deadline approaches for registering PPP use and storage

All businesses, organisations or sole traders using or storing professional plant protection products (PPPs) or adjuvants in Great Britain (England, Scotland or Wales) must register with Defra by 22 June 2022.

The Official Controls (Plant Protection Products) Regulations 2020 (OCR) are now in force and require a central register documenting the locations of where PPPs and adjuvants are stored, where sales are managed, where records are kept, and where the products are applied (if on business property, such as land you own or rent).

This legal requirement is being backed up by increased inspections and will be enforced.

Registration applies to all organisations, whatever the size or business structure. Employees who use professional pesticides do not have to be individually registered, nor do those solely using amateur home & garden products.

You should not add the addresses where you apply PPPs for clients on their land.

Defra will collect this information on behalf of the Scottish and Welsh Governments. Businesses in Northern Ireland, the Channel Islands and the Isle of Man do not need to register under this legislation.

The registration form can be found on GOV.uk and should be submitted by the 22 June deadline. Assistance in filling out the form can be gained by contacting Defra.

EXAMPLE

The woodland is owned by an estate / private individual / public authority. The land is managed by an external woodland management company, and they hire a contractor to apply a PPP.

The contractor needs to complete the form as the buyer and storer of the PPP. However, as the contractor does not own or rent the land, they do not need to submit details of where the PPP was used.

The woodland management company need not complete the form as they didn't buy, store or

apply the PPP.

The landowner needs to complete the section on location of PPP used as the owner of the land. Although, the woodland management company may submit this on behalf of the landowner, and under the landowner's name.

This would also include harvesting contractors using spray bars when felling, and establishment contractors with knap sack sprayers.

Nurseries treating trees would need to complete all sections of the form.

Investigating the weevil problem

continued from p31

- Josh Roberts introduced the Can Do Fund, which supports Forest and Land Scotland research into Hylobius.
- Spotta is a remote weevil monitoring device that allows you to monitor multiple sites in real time. In recent trials across Scotland, the system supplied enough information to reduce site visits and chemical use by ensuring resources were targeted at the right locations.
- The Lure and Kill Project, a Forest Research, University of Greenwich and Sentomol collaboration, has developed a new compound made from Scots Pine and Sitka Spruce that is more attractive than the real plant. The physical Hylopod™ system



Spotta is a remote weevil monitoring device that allows you to monitor multiple sites in real time

can deliver entomopathogenic nematodes and fungi which are lethal to the beetle.

- Amanda Bryan presented the latest from the Scottish Forestry Trust & the Hylobius Research Fund. The need for continued industry support in terms of sites and physical funding cannot be understated. HIRP has developed a model for suggested funding based on the size of land holdings that already have pesticides applied:

£2.50 per hectare. The group aims to raise and invest £2 million over the next five years.

The full series of presentations can be found on the HIRP pages of the Confor website, along with the full aims of HIRP, membership details, and links to the Hylobius Research Fund, hosted by the Scottish Forestry Trust to support the group's work.



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Right: Crail Primary School pupils with winning 'Climate Smarter' project. Left: BSW Timber, Tilhill & RTS hosted activities at both events.



GROWING FUTURES:

Confor supports events celebrating STEM in Aberdeen and Dundee

Pupils from primary and secondary schools across northeast Scotland put their minds to the test and tried their hands at forestry teamwork challenges in April.

The contests were part of a Regional Celebration of Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths (STEM), hosted by the Scottish Council for Development and Industry's Young Engineers and Science Clubs (YESC).

Around 140 attendees tackled challenges from industry volunteers at Aberdeen Science Centre on 21 April, and at Dundee Science Centre on 28 April. These included

sessions on timber construction and tree identification from Confor members BSW Timber, Tilhill, and RTS.

"I really enjoyed being asked to represent BSW Group and Confor in helping some bright kids from the northeast understand what we do in the timber sector,"



said Davis Mills, Mill Manager for BSW Timber. "It's so important for us as a sector to inspire the future stars of our industry.

"In recent years, it's been hard to get students and technical young people interested in our sector, so we have to do something to help change that. Hopefully our small contribution helps, and I passionately believe we need to do more of this to ensure we attract the best young people for the future."

An Aberdeen Grammar pupil remarked: "I liked being able to talk to people in the field and see what they do. I enjoyed getting tips from them and it gave great insight."

The activities went hand-in-hand with the YESC 'Climate Smarter' project, which provided pupils with the resources and training to reimagine their schools using sustainable materials, energy storage, and smart technologies. Confor and the Scottish Forestry Trust have committed to be a sponsor of the initiative



for three years, and we are grateful to Dave Mills of BSW and Logie for providing the wood samples for the school packs.

Participating schools showcased their entries at the Dundee event, where Crail Primary School, Fife, and St. Paul's Academy, Dundee, took the respective primary and secondary titles.

"From the kit resources to the professional learning sessions and celebration event for learners, it has been so well considered and organised at every level," commented Gillian Eaves, Principal Teacher at Fife Pedagogy. "This has been a high-quality experience for all involved.

"We hope in the future to continue to develop our partnership and for even more Fife schools to get involved with this wonderful STEM based project and inspire our future innovators."

The YESC programme seeks to encourage young people across Scotland to take an interest in and get involved with STEM subjects at an early level, opening up career paths beyond the classroom.

Over 1,500 primary and secondary schools are currently a part of the network, engaged in a variety of in-classroom and extracurricular projects to build knowledge and skills.



Nicholsons nursery supply trees for RHS Chelsea Flower Show exhibition

Nicholsons Lockhart Garratt was invited to collaborate with Finnish designer Taina Suonio on a sustainable garden exhibit for the RHS Chelsea Flower Show in May.

Titled 'Connected', the space featured an oak tree studio centrepiece and calming water feature. The design was sponsored by Exante Ltd and veered away from hard landscaping materials that can incur a heavy carbon cost.

All planting was sourced from UK nurseries, the majority coming from Nicholsons' 23-acre location in Oxfordshire which has plant healthy status and uses only peat free compost.

Richard Holt, Senior Landscape Contracts Manager at Nicholsons, commented: "As somebody that has been involved with landscape construction their entire working life there is no greater honour than to be asked to build a garden at RHS Chelsea.

"This garden is especially exciting for me as it reflects the sustainability and 'gentle' touch philosophy we hold dear at Nicholsons, and to be designed by such a well-respected, environmentally credible designer is a real testament to our company culture and values."

The garden will next be installed in its entirety at University College London Hospital's cancer ward.

New campaign to raise awareness of bark-stripping squirrels

The public are being asked to share evidence of the damage done by squirrels in a new social media campaign from the UK Squirrel Accord (UKSA).

Between April and August, grey squirrels create open wounds on young broadleaf trees by gnawing on and stripping back bark to access the phloem tissue inside, weakening and often killing the tree in the process.

This damage costs the UK economy around £37 million a year in lost timber value, reduced carbon capture, damage mitigation, and replacement planting for the trees that die.



UKSA is a UK-wide partnership of 41 leading conservation and forestry organisations, government agencies and companies, all looking to improve and protect the red squirrel population and ensure the long-term health of UK woodlands by managing the impact of the invasive grey squirrel species.

Their campaign aims to raise awareness and gather evidence of tree damage caused by grey squirrels over the summer months. They are asking for images, videos and stories to be shared using #barkstripping on social media, or by emailing info@squirrelaccord.uk.



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Woodland creation on tenanted farms in Scotland – FAQs



Graeme Leith, Real Estate Partner at Brodies LLP, answers our questions on natural capital projects within a lease structure.

Scottish Government planting targets, combined with an increasing awareness of the carbon sequestration opportunities of new woodland creation, are causing many land managers and occupiers to consider the long-term use for rural land across Scotland. Tenanted land accounts for a significant part of these areas, and tenant farmers are becoming increasingly interested in the economic and practical land management potential of small and large scale forestry projects.

HOW DOES THE WOODLAND CREATION PROCESS WORK FOR TENANTED FARMS?

Woodland creation on tenanted farms in Scotland is not a new concept. Tree planting is recognised as permitted diversification in the agricultural tenancy legislation and since 2003 it has not been possible for a landlord to prevent a tenant under a secure agricultural tenancy or limited duration tenancy from diversifying into non-agricultural activity on tenanted land.

Recent legislative changes have extended these diversification rights to tenants under modern limited duration tenancies and repairing tenancies.

If trees are planted, a tenant is entitled to compensation at lease expiry, equivalent to the value of such trees to an incoming tenant for cropping. The estimated adverse impact on rental value resulting from the loss of land for productive agricultural use, and the cost to the landlord of reinstatement following harvesting are deducted from compensation. If these deductions exceed the tree value to an incoming tenant, the tenant would end up being liable to pay compensation to the landlord.

WHY HAVE AGRICULTURAL TENANTS NOT PREVIOUSLY PURSUED PRODUCTIVE WOODLAND CREATION?

There are various practical reasons including:

- The need for landlord co-operation. Unlike other forms of diversification, tree planting requires specific landlord consent and a failure to respond to a request could not be interpreted as such. If planting grants were being obtained, a landlord would need to consent and agree to be responsible for grant obligations after lease termination. So, the woodland creation would have to be compatible with the landlord's own aspirations for land use



- Duration / uncertainty. A tenant's individual and family circumstances will impact on eventual lease duration, but few tenants can be confident that their lease will remain in place when the trees reach maturity. This means that their financial return would be in the form of waygo compensation, which is difficult to estimate at the stage of planting.

Consequently, it has usually been the case that planting schemes have been implemented by landowners while tenant farmers have secured a financial return in the form of a premium for surrendering the lease, or relinquishing the land required.

Many leases also permit the landlord to resume the land that is required, but there are practical challenges there, particularly for larger schemes that involve a substantial part of the let farm. The landowner-led scheme appears to still be the standard arrangement, but we are increasingly aware of tenant farmers looking to take forward their own woodland creation projects.

WHY IS THERE A GROWING INTEREST IN WOODLAND CREATION NOW?

Increasing financial and regulatory pressures are causing farmers to reassess the viability of some farming enterprises in their current forms, particularly for future generations. Surrendering leases for woodland creation can achieve a significant cap-

ital sum, for use in retirement planning or an alternative business.

However, depending on circumstances, a partial lease surrender / diversified project that provides woodland creation but also results in a smaller, more productive agricultural holding can leave the farming business better equipped for the future.

ARE THERE ANY OTHER DRIVERS?

Carbon sequestration income is increasingly the financial driver for tenant-led schemes. The Woodland Carbon Code permits tenants to register and implement schemes although, as with planting grants, the regulatory authority requires a landlord to guarantee that it will be maintained for the contractual period. The proposals therefore have to correspond with a landowner's own land-use aspirations, and we envisage that would typically involve a negotiation on income share from carbon units, as well as an agreed strategy for the sale of those units and maintenance of the planting scheme.

A collegiate landlord tenant relationship and shared vision on how to reconcile the economic and environmental benefits with ongoing food production will be key to the success of new woodland creation on tenanted farms in Scotland.

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Confor has partnered with law firms Brodies LLP and Atkinson Ritson Solicitors to run a legal clinic for members looking for guidance on key issues that impact forest owners and the forestry sector.

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Domestic demand in a downturn

Harry explains how labour shortages are causing a backlog of unused timber stock, and what that might mean for industry outputs in the near future.

In the dim and distant past (the 1980s, in fact) I studied A level economics at school in Somerset. Today, you don't need to understand much about the subject to realise there are some serious external factors impacting the UK economy that are likely to affect price and demand for forest products, both in the short and medium term.

Having seen two years of very strong demand for timber post-Covid, the expectation had been for that trend to extend into 2022. Even though the ports were groaning with landed stock of sawn timber from the fourth quarter of last year, all the wise heads felt that spring would see this clear.

Surely, by April or May at the latest, the normal business cycle would resume and strong demand for sawn timber would increase? Well, unfortunately, things have not quite followed that script.

The good and the bad

First, the good news is that there has indeed been reasonably strong demand for fencing in the south of England, following on from the damage of early winter gales. This has continued, though not seen to the same extent further north.

And, er, that's it for the good.

Whilst new building is showing signs of healthy demand, fuelled no doubt by strong house price growth, an apparent shortage of labour is hampering activity.

Much of home-grown production ends up in the DIY and repair and maintenance sectors, which have been showing very weak demand so far this year. Big merchants are reporting anywhere between 75% and 50% of expected sales and on some products, it drops even lower.

Decking is particularly notable, though again is likely being hampered by a shortage of tradesmen to undertake the work.

Running out of room

Sawmills that built up very high stocks of finished goods throughout the winter and are now facing a troubling scenario: potentially carrying those goods into the next winter period. Long term, this outcome could lead to prolonged production shuts as they run out of space to store material and cash to fund the stock build.

Most mills report running at below budgeted volumes and expect to reduce output further for the balance of the year.



Looking further afield

The news from Europe does not sound any better with a similar picture of slow consumer demand for DIY products also reported.

And what of the dreadful situation in Ukraine and the resultant interruption to supply from Russian producers? Well, thus far sanctions don't appear to have impacted the market for sawn timber, either here in UK or in wider Europe.

As things stand, the ripple effect isn't expected to hit anytime soon.

A less demanding outlook

If we assume the above situation continues, demand for standing timber is likely to continue to slow for all products in the near future.

Most large users are reporting a full inventory of raw material secured for at least the next few quarters and will undoubtedly adjust their purchasing accordingly.

But what about the economics A level - how did I do? Well, I failed it twice

And that probably tells you all you need to know about the value of my opinions on economics - or anything else for that matter.

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Not for sale: Opportunities are few and far between for woodland buyers

Tim Kirk reflects on the lack of availability for woodland buyers and investigates what may lie at the root of the problem.

My historic woodland sales records show that in 1995, John Clegg and Co published a list of woodland sales in Wales that covered four sides of A4. Today, they and the rest of the woodland market sadly have little to offer potential buyers.

This is perhaps less of an issue in Scotland, with its larger forest area, but Wales and England see just one or two woodlands come to market a month. I believe there are several reasons for this.

Firstly, the performance of woodlands as capital assets with recognition of their importance to our wellbeing and investment value in the context of climate change. Spurred on by timber shortages and the grant-led demand for new planting land, this performance has been excellent. Additionally, several tax benefits acknowledge the long-term nature of the investment for individual investors.

As a result, there are fewer sellers of privately owned woodland (outside the nor-

mal death, divorce and taxes criteria!).

Secondly, there are managers who have cornered particular sections of the market. For instance, one company manages a quantity of commercial spruce plantations in Wales - these never seem to reappear and are perhaps being sold in their internal market.

Thirdly, the reappearance of company/unit trust ownership, last seen in the guise of corporate pension funds 20 years ago. They raise money, see the need to invest in woodlands, and bid up for the few offerings on the market.

The prices that are paid by these companies can be quite exceptional for vendors, typically operating at the £1 million+ market level, with a near record over £30 million paid for one plantation last year. Recently, a single fund sold up and all but one lease area was reacquired by another fund.

An interesting comment from a sawmillier claimed that these outfits offered better business since they were regular fellers of

timber, whereas individual owners tend to hang back and protect their IHT benefit.

Even institutions like the Woodland Trust and National Trust have been occasional buyers, and those woods are unlikely ever to appear on the market again. Though, in fairness, the Woodland Trust have been known to try and sell newly created woods.

Additionally, the impact of property 'splitters' has been especially apparent in England. Some (probably modest) estimates say up to 200 woods have had this treatment in the last 20 years. It's a good business model - buy at £5000 per acre, then sell smaller units at £10,000 - but the knock-on effect on the cohesion of that woodland can be devastating, especially for broadleaf woods.

It's hard to have so many owners, all with varied objectives, doing their own thing in an Ancient Woodland that cries out for continuity of management/ownership.

Finally, we must consider the loss of state woodland sales to the market. Sales of all sizes across England, Scotland and Wales in the 1980s and 1990s allowed a whole new range of owners to acquire woods, as well as the regular buyers of plantations. Now, there's only the very occasional sale, usually private with a long lease buy-back.

By selling off a wide variety of property, the Forestry Commission often divested itself of costs but also allowed the private sector to acquire some superb plantations. My own FC restock purchase site was so neglected that the woodland officer awarded extra grants to help sort it.

I can identify some 60 woods owned by Natural Resources Wales that are small outliers, often untended with hard access routes. The Welsh Government has a 'no sale' policy so these woods sit there with precious little activity beyond the occasional costly fence repair. It's a pity that political dogma does not reassess the sales potential here, and the opportunity to cash in on some 'abandoned' assets.

Add all these factors together and you can understand why there is so little on offer in the market. Good news for the existing owners (unless they want more) but dispiriting for first-time investors looking for pastures new.

Tim Kirk has worked in the forestry industry since 1969 and specialises in woodland valuations.





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Thought you were out of the woods? Think again



Confor recently warned that the UK faces declining supplies of home-grown wood due to lack of productive tree planting. **Stuart Goodall**, Chief Executive, examines the threats to supply and why the UK must urgently move productive tree planting up the agenda.

It should be concerning to everyone when a mature economy with the perfect conditions for growing a wide range of tree species is in a potentially precarious position with wood supplies. But that's exactly where we find ourselves.

For decades we have not taken responsibility for investing in our domestic wood, leaving us fighting for future supplies as global demand rises and our own resources fall.

UK: The big net importer

The UK is the world's second largest importer of wood after China, importing around £7.5 billion annually, because it currently grows only around 20% of its wood requirement.

In 2020, we imported 48 million cubic metres of wood products, of which 22% was sawnwood and wood-based panels destined for use by the building and construction industry. By 2021 this had increased by 15% – a rare occurrence according to Timber Development UK.

Beyond our shores, the World Bank estimates that global demand for wood products will treble by 2050. This huge increase is being driven by population growth, higher living standards, greater urbanisation, and greater use of what is increasingly seen as a more sustainable building material.

These trends are being compounded at a time when the security of natural resources is under ever greater threat from geo-political upheavals, as witnessed by the Russian-Ukrainian crisis and soaring energy prices.

Potential longer-term economic sanctions placed against Russian exports will inevitably bring significant disruption to sup-

ply chains and price hikes, in turn putting pressure on countries typically supplied by Russia, Ukraine and Belarus to seek building material imports from other sources – including those Scandinavian countries that the UK relies upon so heavily.

To add to looming supply chain woes, there also remains some uncertainty of supply due to Brexit. New regulations and disrupted shipments can mean materials from overseas are often delayed or challenging to source. Labour shortages, such as the lack of HGV drivers, have also played a part.

An overlooked partner for Net Zero

The UK's commitment to become net zero by 2050 is, in part, dependent on the greater sequestration of carbon dioxide (CO₂) to which productive tree planting in the UK can make a significant contribution.

Wood in all its versatile forms is a unique natural material that is truly sustainable. Not only is wood a readily available substitute for brick, concrete, steel and polyurethane, but the tree from which it evolves sequesters large amounts of CO₂ as it grows.

Wood fibre insulation, in particular, is an excellent choice for insulating homes and has impressive green credentials. Recyclable,

compostable and dimensionally stable, it is typically a by-product from waste wood from the sawmill industry, further adding to its sustainable characteristics.

It is safe to say that no other construction material can match all the advantages that natural wood provides. And with the UK facing the likely scenario of increased competition for future imports, it is little wonder that Confor is highlighting the potential risk to major industries.

The opportunity is here

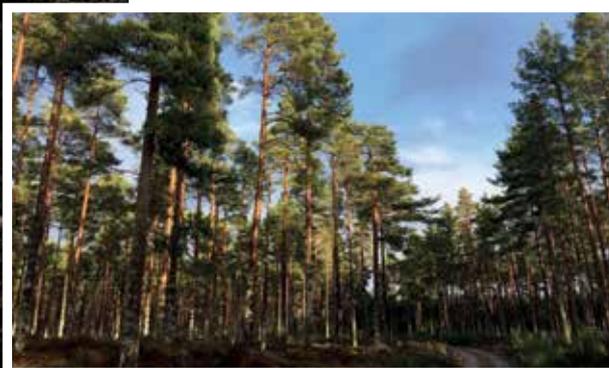
The UK has ideal conditions for growing wood to build low-carbon homes and is a global leader in certifying that its forests are sustainably managed. Yet while the UK government has stated its ambition for more tree planting, there has been little action on the ground outside of Scotland.

Confor is now calling for much greater impetus behind those aspirations to ensure we have enough wood to help meet increasing construction demand.

The causes of the UK's current position are complex and range from outdated perceptions of productive forestry, to a disconnect in thinking between the demand for wood products and understanding where they come from. It also encompasses significant hesitation on behalf of farmers and other landowners to invest in longer term planting projects.

Productive tree planting can deliver real financial benefits to rural economies and contribute to the UK's net zero strategy; however, the focus of government continues to be on flood prevention and the narrow planting of native woodland solely

“BEYOND OUR SHORES,
THE WORLD BANK
ESTIMATES THAT
GLOBAL DEMAND FOR
WOOD PRODUCTS WILL
TREBLE BY 2050.”



for biodiversity. While these are critically important activities, the importance of future supplies of wood has largely been overlooked.

A step-change is needed in attitudes towards productive tree planting to enable government to meet its own tree planting targets and its ambitions to use more homegrown timber in construction - without one you can't achieve the other.

We also need to ensure that our existing productive forests are optimised with planting stocks that deliver higher productivity and improved quality of fibre for downstream processing and manufacture.

Being a highly populated, mature economy with a limited land mass, the UK is likely to always be a large importer of wood products. However, the building blocks of a stronger domestic security of wood supply are in place. What is needed now is greater stimulus by the UK government in order to leverage these advantages into reality.

This article was produced as part of Changing Attitudes, Confor's campaign for more productive forests in the UK. Versions of this instalment were printed in The Times, Politics Home, Architecture Magazine and more.



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Nature's wages

Humanity faces three existential crises – in climate, resource provision, and biodiversity. With only one Earth, housing 8 billion people, we urgently need to invest in all three, and use land as efficiently as possible. It's what we call natural capital management.

Forestry has, arguably, been doing this for decades, with 'net capture and storage of carbon in the forest ecosystem and in wood products' and 'management in a way that conserves or enhances biodiversity' integrated into business models through UKFS and UKWAS.

Natural capital management mechanisms are now developing in many other sectors, and these have knock-on implications for forest management and wood production. The Woodland Carbon Code is a familiar example, enabling other sectors to use forests to make the final step of a net zero journey.

The new kid on the block is Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG), which puts habitat loss – one of the biggest global pressures facing biodiversity – onto a developer's bottom line.

What is BNG?

We need development, whether housing to meet shortages, or the renewables and transport infrastructure of a low-carbon society. Yet we also know that it is one of the biggest pressures on global biodiversity. BNG is a market mechanism to manage the rapid infrastructure investment we need, without the habitat loss we cannot afford.

In England, BNG forms part of the 2021 Environment Act, and is set to become a regulatory requirement for developers in the next few years. Any development will have to measure the amount of habitat lost, and pay for at least 10% net gain, secured for 30 years. This encourages developers to avoid damaging valuable habitat in the first place, and creates an income stream for investment in nature.

Nature loss and gain are measured through the Biodiversity Metric 3.1. This multiplies scores for distinctiveness, condition, strategic significance, and area (or length, for hedgerows and waterways), to calculate biodiversity units. Developers calculate the units lost through their development, and pay for compensatory units by uplifting scores on land onsite or nearby, through either changing land use to higher

Biodiversity Net Gain will become a requirement for developers in England within a few years. **Dr Eleanor Harris** explains what it is, and why foresters should know about it.



distinctiveness, or by improving condition.

We have already seen resultant natural capital investment on the ground. Because habitat takes time to develop, landowners near development sites are undertaking baseline assessments and making interventions to uplift their scores. This creates a ready-made 'habitat bank' of biodiversity units which are being sold to developers, along with a contract of maintenance for 30 years, ready for when they are needed.

In Wales and Scotland, BNG is not yet law, but there are firm plans to introduce similar mechanisms, through National Planning Framework 4 in Scotland, and Nature Recovery Action Plan in Wales.

Whereas carbon offsetting is voluntary and driven by market pressures, BNG is regulatory policy. Selling Woodland Carbon Units is more like selling a house than selling bricks: proximity to the head office, participation of the local school, or the presence of glamorous wildlife will add desirability value which can outweigh any notional 'carbon price' – while a bad-news story can ruin their value.

“WHEREAS CARBON OFFSETTING IS VOLUNTARY AND DRIVEN BY MARKET PRESSURES, BNG IS REGULATORY POLICY.”

With BNG, on the other hand, although developers still want a good story, the price is more likely to be linked to the value of the land and the cost of maintenance.

Woodland in the Biodiversity Metric

Woodland biodiversity, like other habitats, is assessed on distinctiveness, condition, and strategic significance.

From upland oakwood to lowland beech and yew, 18 native woodland habitats are classified as high distinctiveness. There is no distinction for ancient and non-ancient woodlands, as the features characteristic of ancient woodland are measured independently in the condition assessment.

Other broadleaf, pine or mixed woodlands are categorised as medium distinctiveness, and other coniferous woodland as low.

The woodland condition metric is based on the England Woodland Biodiversity Group's woodland condition assessment methodology, led by Confor Members Sylva Foundation. This measures age distribution of trees, herbivore damage, invasive species, tree health, diversity and proportion of native trees, ground flora, vertical structure, veteran trees, deadwood, and nutrient enrichment.

Where woodland has been felled, and the previous condition was not assessed, the condition is automatically fixed as 'good', to deter developers from clearing



“BIODIVERSITY NET GAIN IS JUST ONE TOOL IN THE BOX OF NATURAL CAPITAL MANAGEMENT, YET IT IS ONE THAT EVERY LAND MANAGER SHOULD UNDERSTAND.”

mate Smart Forestry conference was tension between the need for more diversity in species and silviculture to deliver climate resilience, and the long period of lowered yields, increased management costs and risk involved in delivering these changes on the ground in a changing climate.

Long-term BNG contracts (30+ years), perhaps with construction companies also interested in demonstrating growing their own materials within a regenerative system, could provide a funding stream to bridge that gap.

BNG is overseen by local authorities, so the importance of contributing to local development plans is more important than ever. Developers must deliver BNG within the same local authority, and as close to their site as is feasible, so the opportunity is greatest for peri-urban and lowland woodlands.

What are the risks?

Unlike the Woodland Carbon Code, Biodiversity Metric 3.1 does not yet consider ‘leakage’ – lost production being pushed onto other land, perhaps overseas and with a higher biodiversity impact.

The rural location, financial value, and habitat value of large wood-producing forests means wood production is less likely to be impacted. However, it would be good to see a leakage calculation in a future version of Biodiversity Metric, to enable BNG to contribute better to a balanced solution to the triple crises.

The detail of the metric has been evolving, and there remain possibilities of ‘perverse outcomes’ from the scoring mechanism. Foresters might question why conifers are only given the same distinctiveness as arable, when their inputs and cultivation are generally lower, and impor-

tance as habitat widely recognised.

However, the farmer might point out that, through interventions like deer control, thinning, good tree health, and provision of deadwood, a timber crop could score more highly on condition. For all the farmer’s efforts to build soil biodiversity, reduce chemical inputs, or create a matrix landscape of zero-till crops, horticulture and orchards, their score remains stubbornly at 1.

Meanwhile, in the most long-established habitats, woodland ecologists might query why the only ‘woodland’ habitat to be rated as ‘very high distinctiveness’, is mountain willow scrub when several types of grassland are in this category. The answer is probably that the metric here favours habitats less well protected by designations – but surely it would be better for all habitats to be designated and scored equally.

The good news is that the metric – as its numbering system suggests – is subject to continuous improvement. As it is rolled out, it will be important that woodland managers and ecologists are engaged in its development, to ensure it delivers the best outcomes.

What other ways are there to monetise biodiversity?

There are already many ways in which biodiversity means business. Birds nesting on the ground or in trees cost planters and harvesters money. Otters and kingfishers increase the rental on a holiday cottage. Seaside property values rose 7% during the pandemic. Carbon units from native woodland sell for higher prices than from spruce. Over a million people give money to the RSPB.

Yet this ‘unregulated free market’ in biodiversity is inefficient and prone to abuse. BNG aims to put habitat loss and compensation on an evidence-based, costed footing.

Conclusion

Biodiversity net gain is just one tool in the box of natural capital management, yet it is one that every land manager should understand. For sites near developments, it represents a significant income-generation opportunity. For everyone, it provides a powerful starting point for demonstrating habitat improvement with potential for a wide range of application.

Natural capital management requires balancing and maximising the global goods of provisioning, biodiversity and carbon, as well as local benefits like recreation or flood prevention, across habitat types. It is a complex task, and BNG provides one useful piece of the mechanism to achieve it.

Dr Eleanor Harris is Natural Capital and Carbon Leader at Galbraith, providing natural capital assessment and management services for clients across Scotland and England.

sites without measuring them.

Strategic significance has a lower weighting, but is useful for directing projects to the best location. Woodland would be given a high strategic significance score where it is identified in a local plan, strategy or policy. Where the location is ecologically desirable – for example expanding existing woodland, or adjacent to a river – it scores medium.

Urban trees, lines of trees, and hedgerows are also covered by the metric.

What is the potential?

BNG is no substitute for creating and managing forests yielding high-quality timber, which is crucial for tackling the climate and resource crises. Yet BNG does have potential to bring neglected woodland into management, to create an income stream, and to deliver significant biodiversity benefits.

For example, BNG could be used to fund activities like deer or squirrel control, rhododendron removal, conservation thinning, or replanting of woods impacted by disease.

Significant BNG units may be gained by developing fragmented conifer blocks and hedgerows into a connected network of trees in a farmed landscape, providing benefits like shelter and firewood as well as the increased habitat benefit which provides the initial income stream.

A strong theme of the recent ICF Cli-



Silvicultural consequences of felling licences impasse

Seán provides a bi-annual update from the Republic of Ireland

Despite constant claims from the Forest Service that they are beginning to get control of the Felling Licence debacle, and are issuing an increasing number of licences, in practice foresters and forest owners have seen no significant change.

As a practicing forestry consultant I advise owners that it will take at least two years, maybe more, to get a Felling Licence because that is the current average waiting time. Indeed, a waiting period of three years is not uncommon. In addition, because the Forest Service have suspended or eliminated all direct telephone line contact with their Felling Section, it is much harder to get updates on the status of a Felling Licence application.

Obviously, the main focus of the current situation to date has been on the financial consequences for forest owners, and the impact of raw material shortages on the timber processing industry and harvesting contractors. Of no less importance, however, are the silvicultural consequences of delayed thinning - especially on gley soils - and the associated financial consequences of adopting a no-thinning regime because the plantation top height has passed the critical point.

Gley soils account for almost 25% of Ireland's soil cover, and have been extensively afforested with mainly coniferous species. They produce fast growing, high yield class crops which require different establishment and management practices in comparison to other mineral soil types. Because of their high water table, and resultant impermeability, they are very susceptible to windthrow, especially post-thinning.

The key is to thin early and certainly before the crop has reached the critical top height. However, if the first thinning especially is delayed by two or three years because the Felling Licence has not been issued, then in many cases it becomes too



Removing Scots Pine from mixture with Beech

“TWO OR THREE YEARS WAITING FOR A FELLING LICENCE CAN MOVE A CROP FROM POTENTIAL SUPPRESSION TO BEING SUPPRESSED.”

risky and the plantation has to be managed as a no thin crop. This has major financial implications for the owner vis-à-vis no thinning revenues, and a much smaller average tree size at clearfelling, which results in lower quantities of valuable commercial sawlog and higher quantities of less valuable pallet material.

Felling Licence delays also present major silvicultural consequences for broadleaf crops, particularly when planted in mixtures with European Larch and Scots Pine. From 1998, the majority of Pendunculate/Sessile

Oak and Beech was planted in 50:50 mixtures with European Larch or Scots Pine as a nurse crop, as recommended by the Forest Service at the time. Unforeseen problems began to emerge after 10 years with suppression of the Oak/Beech, especially mixed with European Larch, and after 15 years with Scots Pine.

Ironically, the Forest Service issued a warning to relevant owners that if they failed to remove the conifer crop and the Oak or Beech got suppressed, they would downgrade the plantation to a conifer and reduce the annual premium by approximately €55 per hectare.

Two or three years waiting for a Felling Licence can move a crop from potential suppression to being suppressed. In addition to the financial hit for the owner, the sheer waste and loss of future mature Oak & Beech forests due to Felling Licence delays is unforgivable.

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AFFORESTATION AT LOWEST LEVEL IN 75 YEARS

New planting in the Republic has plunged to its lowest level since 1946 with just 2000 hectares recorded last year, of which around half was native woodland and broadleaf.

The balance of 1000 ha. recorded as conifers was mainly Sitka spruce, but when biodiversity and obligatory broadleaves are taken into account, it means only 700 ha. of commercial conifers were planted in 2021. These are absolutely shocking figures, following on from dramatically lower and lower levels of afforestation every year for the last 10 years.

The ramifications for nurseries,

contractors and forestry professionals are already being felt and that looks set to continue for many years.

The implications for the timber processing industry in 30 years time are enormous, and considering the investment they have made in upgrading their mills, adding capacity, and creating new export markets, they have every right to feel badly let down by government.



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Strategic Timber Transport Scheme – Summary of 2022 bids for funding

The Scottish Government's Strategic Timber Transport Scheme (STTS) co-finances projects that facilitate the sustainable transport of timber in rural areas of Scotland. **Paul Boobyer** summarises progress with the latest round of applications, including the prospect of an exciting electric-powered freshwater timber barge.

Overview of STTS awards 2022-23

The 2022-23 budget for the Scottish Forestry administered fund is £7 million (including £5m from Transport Scotland). As usual it was oversubscribed.

Around £1.2 million is set aside for the Timberlink shipping service and to support project officer roles for the Timber Transport Forum and regional groups. In Scotland, there were 36 bids for infrastructure projects with total costs of approximately £13 million, requesting £9.5 million from the STTS. Of those, 21 have been offered STTS support, including 18 public road improvements, to which the fund typically contributes 50-70%.

Leftover costs typically come from local authority or forestry sector partners. As the scheme is reliant on an annual budget allocation, multi-year projects can't be funded, but several councils have implemented phased improvements to roads over a number of years.

The scale of demand reflects the continuing need for investment in rural roads and other infrastructure associated with timber transport in Scotland. The Highland Council has been particularly successful in gaining private-sector contributions to improving public roads accessing forests, which will exceed council contributions this year.

The scheme continues to make tangible benefits to communities on timber transit routes. For example, supporting the diversion of timber traffic away from the centre of the village of Dallas in Morayshire and

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FUNDING TO BOOST THE ROLLOUT OF ZERO-EMISSION HGVs

The UK Government has announced a £200 million funding package to boost the rollout of zero-emission HGVs.

An open-call competition will be launched for manufacturers, energy providers and fleet and infrastructure operators to showcase their technology on UK roads, beginning with demonstrations of

battery electric and hydrogen fuel cell HGVs.

This follows last year's consultation on the timeframe to phase out the sale of new, non-zero emission HGVs. The Government proposed that sales of new HGVs less than or equal to 26 tonnes should cease by 2035 and all new HGVs sold in the UK must be zero-emission from 2040.

Currently, the UK Government is seeking evidence on HGVs or HGV use cases that could justify being exempt from the 2035 phase-out date. Such vehicles may need until 2040 to transition to zero-

emission technologies. For example, they may:

- carry heavy or abnormal loads.
- have an additional power draw.
- spend most of their time operating in specialist or remote areas.
- be used in long-haul applications.

The consultation will close on 22 July and the Timber Transport Forum is considering its response. If you would like to provide evidence on use cases that may warrant exemptions, please get in touch with Paul Boobyer (paul.boobyer@confor.org.uk).



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continued from p49

the provision of passing places on the narrow Glen Lyon road in Perthshire. Some projects will enable the reopening of roads that are currently closed to timber traffic.

Scottish Forestry has considered the potential challenges facing the successful applicants, such as obtaining materials like bitumen, and the impact of rising costs of materials on the procurement process. They are committed to be flexible in response to applicants facing these challenges.

Successful modal shift bids

Three private sector modal shift projects will facilitate the transportation of timber by sea.

At Gorteneorn on the Ardnamurchan peninsula, a floating pier will be constructed. A slipway is also planned for Crossaig on the Kintyre peninsula to enable a small boat to dock and take timber to processors in Scotland.

Loch Arkaig electric-powered barge

The Scottish Government has set ambitious targets to reduce carbon emissions from transport by 75% by 2030, and to decarbonise completely by 2045. Scottish Forestry in their Business Plan say that in delivering the Strategic Timber Transport Fund, they will be moving towards the total decarbonisation and future proofing of timber transport and timber harvesting.

The project at Loch Arkaig will be a tangible example of the decarbonisation of timber transport. The proposal for a Scottish-designed and built system will involve a battery-powered barge ferrying a forwarder, running on biofuels and bio-lubricants, loaded with timber across the loch. The loch is used for rearing fish, so any pollution would be a serious issue.

The STTS has offered co-funding for the slipways and electric charger.

With the focus on woodland expansion, particularly in Scotland, the STTS continues to play a vital role in mitigating the impacts of timber transport by improving public roads for communities, improving access to forests, and facilitating a reduction in CO₂ outputs. It will also help Scotland lead the way in the decarbonisation of the British forestry sector.

Gazelle SG and alternative insecticide suppliers for the control of Hylobius

Gazelle SG has become the insecticide of choice for the control of Hylobius, writes **Colin Palmer**, due to having an excellent effect on the weevil and a reasonable safety profile for the operator.

Some years ago, various cheaper options were offered to foresters under the parallel trade agreements with the EU. Post-Brexit, these arrangements will cease in Great Britain at the end of 2022, though they will be renewed if required in Northern Ireland.

Effectively, this means that the sale of parallel import products will be permitted until the end of June 2023, with use and storage approval ending at the end of June 2024. However, forestry use final dates may be brought forward if the re-appraisal of Gazelle is finalised in June 2022 as currently anticipated.

In order to conform with the parallel trade regulations, any pesticide imported from Europe must have been manufactured by the same company as the license holder in the UK and have an identical formulation to the main product.

Unfortunately, this was not the case when FTN last alerted foresters to the situation and, as a result, a number of products claiming to be identical to Gazelle SG were forced by HSE to withdraw from the market.

The photograph below shows quite clearly that the earlier counterfeit Pure Ace product is not only a different shade of blue to Gazelle SG, but the particle size is also considerably larger.

Use of such a product would not only be illegal, but also unlikely to control the

weevil and may harm the crop. It is vitally important to check the bona fides of any such insecticides before use.

The current Pure Ace is imported from Hungary, where the product is marketed as Mospilan 20 SG, and it may be assumed that this import is authorised. However, it continues to be prudent to check, as it's not known what became of the previously non-authorised counterfeit product.

It is understood that there are currently a number of authorised parallel imports in the UK based on Gazelle SG, including Antelope, Clayton Vault, Pan Vulcan and Pure Ace.

Be aware that some others are based on Gazelle SP, which has no authorisation for use in forestry.

So, if considering a less expensive option to Gazelle SG, it's safest to satisfy yourself that it is indeed the authorised product and formulation.

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Land Rover's newest bestseller



Eamonn Wall takes the Land Rover Defender 90 for a spin to see if it's been worth the wait.

The new Land Rover Defender went on sale in September 2019, but first deliveries only got underway almost a year later as production slowly ramped up. As it was launched worldwide at the same time, demand was higher than supply.

Assembly is also in a brand-new factory in Slovakia, being produced alongside the slow-selling Discovery 5 (hopefully the Discovery 6 will be more chunky).

The new Defender has been very well

received and is now the best-selling Land Rover vehicle. Not long after launch, Land Rover brought out a new 6-cylinder diesel engine and three versions of this engine now power all diesel models, replacing the original 4-cylinder engines introduced at launch.

The new 6-cylinder, 3-litre Ingenium engine is based on the previous 4-cylinder and is assembled in Wolverhampton. It has a mild hybrid makeup and comes in three states of tune: D200, D250 and D300.

The D200 has 200 bhp and 500 NM of torque, the D250 has 250bhp and 570 Nm; and the D300 has 300bhp and 650 NM. All do 32 mpg. Interestingly, an even more highly tuned version is available in the Range Rover: the D350 has 350 bhp and 700 Nm and returns 36mpg. It replaces the Mexican-built DV8.

The Defender 90 shorter wheelbase, which I test drove here, started to arrive mid-2021, following the initial Defender 110 long wheelbase 4-door launch in 2019. It came with the D250 engine, producing



about the same power as the Discovery 4, so it's plenty powerful enough. The engine is very refined and fast, if not as sonorous as the old V6.

The D250 and D300 are available in the Discovery 5, whilst the D300 and D350 are available in both the Range Rover and Range Rover Sport.

The entry model into the Defender range is the D200 hardtop 90 with two front seats and coil springs - prices start at £35,820 plus VAT. The 4-door 110 hardtop starts at £43,012 plus VAT. Even though all the three diesel engines provide similar fuel consumption, their acceleration figures differ at 9.1, 7.6 and 6.7 seconds to get to 60mph respectively.

Supply remains tight and you must feel sorry for Land Rover as, just when production was getting going and early quality

continued on page 54





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continued from page 52

issues sorted, Covid arrived and slowed things down. Now, the shortage of microchips is holding back operations again and the war in Ukraine has caused more supply issues. However, production is being ramped up to try and cater for the huge demand.

As such, I was pleased to try out the Defender 90, not least because the test drive vehicle was fitted with the new D250 6-cylinder engine. This model also came with the optional air suspension - coil springs are standard on base model 90s.

Standard ground clearance is 227mm with the coil spring fitted and 218mm with the air suspension, which of course can be raised to 291mm for off-roading. Wading depth is 850mm and 900mm respectively, which falls just above the fuel filler cap and just below the windows.

The new Defender is a great looking vehicle. The 90 is 4583mm long including

the spare wheel, and the 110 is 5018mm long. The 90 weighs a heavy 2228kg and the 110 sits at 2415kg. The fuel tank holds a useful 89 litres with an additional 20 litres in the Ad Blue tank. Towing capacity is 3500kg for a braked trailer.

The interior echoes the layout of the original Defender, including a useful tray that runs across the dash and holds the LED screen that controls most functions, though wisely the heating and ventilation are operated with large rotary knobs, and the suspension and gearing also have buttons.

In front of the driver is another LED screen for the speedometer and rev counter. This display can be reconfigured to show the sat nav. The actual computer instrumentation is a bit toy-like and slightly too small in my opinion. On the entry models, analogue dials are mixed up with a central computer screen similar to that found on other Jaguar Land Rover prod-

ucts and looks awful.

All Defenders have the 8-speed automatic ZF German gearbox with low ratio and constant 4WD fitted as standard. This gearbox/drivetrain combination works very well and very smoothly.

The new Defender is a brilliant driving machine both on and off-road. On-road it is up there with its Discovery brother for refinement, but probably suffers a little more wind noise due to its larger mirrors. It handles really well and is a joy to drive briskly on a twisty road.

The standard 90 comes with very comfortable rear seats and a nice, airy back area helped by the alpine windows in the roof. It is a bit of a climb to get in there, though. The boot space behind the seats is very small and the rear seats don't fold flat. Of course, for many people the hardtop with a bulkhead behind the front seats and no rear seating at all will be a more useful vehicle. The 110 hardtop even more so with its large area and underfloor storage compartments.

Even though the Defender is 2m wide, the rear door is narrower and gives plenty of space for the fancy set of rear lights. While they look great, all the gaps between them will surely fill up with muck and be more difficult to clean, compared to a simple single surface as on the Discovery 4. A similar point could be made about the front lights, but less debris usually lands there in the first place.

Land Rover introduced many of its latest gadgets onto the Defender and the rear-view camera mirror is a great invention. Basically, it projects the rear view as seen from a roof mounted camera, meaning if your normal rear view is blocked you can still what is behind you. Perfect!

So, there you have it. The new Defender is a great vehicle and well-priced to reflect its talents.

Eamonn Wall is a chartered forester and arboriculture consultant, and managing director of Eamonn Wall & Co Woodland Design and Management.



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I'm quite sure that the topic of simulators was not exactly what you expected from this issue's machinery article, but please bear with me! Granted, they may not be high up on many shopping lists, particularly those of a contractor, but that does not mean to say that they couldn't play a part in your business.

The simulators discussed here are primarily aimed at the harvester/forwarder market.

WHAT IS A SIMULATOR?

Simulators can come in various guises, from basic entry level right through to very sophisticated pieces of equipment. In basic terms, they take the standard manufacturer controls and allow the user to simulate the use of a machine (harvester or forwarder).

What they see on the screen in front of them is effectively the driver's view. Some use a single screen; others use three with two side-mounted displays to imitate peripheral vision. Various scenarios can be practiced safely, like thinnings or clearfell.

It's no secret that machines, like most other things, have increased in price, and contractors are feeling the financial squeeze. Back when I started in forestry, it wasn't uncommon for a contractor to have an older machine available for a trainee. Training on these dinosaurs often also involved getting to grips with the use of various spanners too, as they more than likely had more hits in their tenure than the Beatles!

These machines usually had high hours but were capable of working away in the right hands, had minimal electronics (by today's standards anyway) and it wasn't the end of the world if they had to sit awaiting a part. Harvesting managers too were fairly tolerant of this arrangement, recognising the longer-term benefits to be had from such a set up.

However, these days, there's a desire from many companies to increase production, and the subsequent pressure that puts on the existing workforce has had an effect. Forest managers want productive and reliable machines - they do not want to be greeted by the fitters van every time they arrive in the forest. Nor do they want to be taking a trainee by the hand all the time, showing them where they have been going wrong or what to do next.

There's generally little financial value left in a machine that's over five years old, and the owner is likely to trade it in for a newer model anyway, so it doesn't sit in the yard waiting for a new trainee jockey.

OPPORTUNITIES TO LEARN

How many of you would have wanted to learn on a brand-new machine, something costing upwards of £400,000? It's bad enough being an experienced operator getting a new machine, waiting for the first scratch or bang to happen.

“SIMULATORS CAN BE USED TO HELP TRAIN A NEW OPERATOR, GETTING THEM USED TO THE MAIN CONTROLS BEFORE LETTING THEM LOOSE ON THE REAL THING.”

Simulators can be used to help train a new operator, getting them used to the main controls before letting them loose on the real thing. In some forest schools in Sweden, students are expected to complete 300 hours on a simulator before they

are allowed near a real machine.

No, it isn't the same as a real machine: they won't get shaken about; they won't get the fear when that tree starts to fall the wrong way; they won't clench when something goes wrong... but they are a fraction of the cost of a real machine.

A simulator doesn't burn diesel, doesn't need repairing, and when something inevitably does go wrong, then you can press reset. From a health and safety point of view, they tick a lot of boxes.

What about experienced hands, are simulators of any use to them? In a word - yes. Many manufacturers now do 'conversion training', where an operator who has been driving one brand of machine is given new equipment from a different

continued on p58



Andrew Smith, Forestry Lecturer at Scottish School of Forestry, UHI

Into the simulation



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MACHINERY

continued from p56

maker. They know the principles of driving the machine but a little time on a simulator gets them used to the different set up.

Often, this method also allows the trainer to demonstrate how to access and set up the machine's computer – and not within the confines of a small cab.

What about letting an operator try another brand's controls before committing to buy a new machine? What about trying different control set ups where there are various options? For example, Komatsu offers both mini leavers and their traditional EME leavers, both of which are compatible with their simulator.

Lastly, and dare I say it, but 'experienced' does not necessarily mean 'most effective'. Simulators allow operators to try new work methods.

“A SIMULATOR DOESN'T BURN DIESEL, DOESN'T NEED REPAIRING, AND WHEN SOMETHING INEVITABLY DOES GO WRONG, THEN YOU CAN PRESS RESET.”

DON'T KNOCK IT UNTIL YOU TRY IT

Although simulators have been on the go for 20+ years, most people will only have seen them at shows. Often, they are viewed as a gimmick but what better chance to try it?

I am fortunate to have access to two John Deere simulators at my work. One laptop-based version, which is more portable, and a larger version complete with seat. Along with the normal simulations available, we also use TimberSkills, a program developed by John Deere to facilitate training of new operators.

I enrol all my students on this, and it gives them a structured learning resource to work through, starting at 'Introducing the mini levers', through to much more complicated tasks where precision and efficiency are paramount. I can also log in remotely to view student progress.

Do they enjoy it? Yes, until they get into a real machine and don't want to go back! They do, however, see the benefit of spending time on the simulator and becoming more familiar with the controls.

From my point of view, since the introduction of the simulators, I have seen more interest in machine operation as a job, heard fewer clatters of the grab against the bolsters, and have seen a decrease in the number of damaged pipes and fittings. I am always worried that the simulators teach students to pull levers too quickly, but that soon disappears once they are on the real machine and getting shaken about!



Most manufacturers of harvesters and forwarders now offer a simulator. Here are just some of the models available today.

JOHN DEERE

The John Deere simulator range is available for both wheeled and tracked machines. From the entry level PC/laptop-based simulator, right through to the high-end model featuring Timbermatic display and functions.

Also available are the TimberSkills training suite and Terrain Editor software, where you can make up sites and crop conditions to suit your operating needs. The G-series models also feature the IBC function found on their machines in real life, which can be enabled/disabled.

KOMATSU

Komatsu's simulator is once again available for wheeled or tracked machines (based on an excavator conversion), harvester and forwarder. A basic PC/laptop version is available, followed by the larger models complete with operator seat. Variations can include a single screen or triple screen option.

Interesting options include the virtual reality headset for added authenticity and a motion platform – basically a moving base plate which replicates how the machine moves whilst driving and working.

LOGSET

Logset only offer one simulator, but it does provide training scenarios for both harvester and forwarder. It features a measuring system so the harvester computer screen also sits in front of the operator – just like the real machine.

Once again, the basic version features a single screen, but a three-screen variant is also available.

PONSSE

Ponsse offer several models of simulator from the basic PC/laptop, through the compact model and then the Multi and Full models. Whilst all offer harvester and forwarder training, neither the basic or the compact feature a seat and drive pedals.

At the top of the range, the Full model features three display screens and the Ponsse Opti measuring system and display screen. All models include Ponsse's own training scenarios.



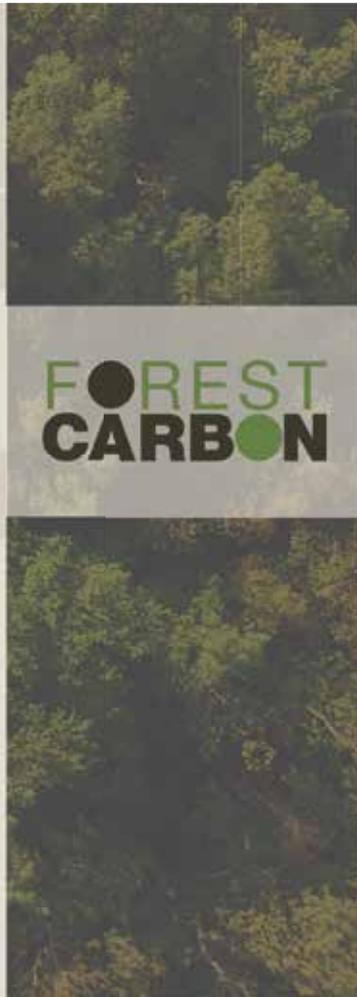
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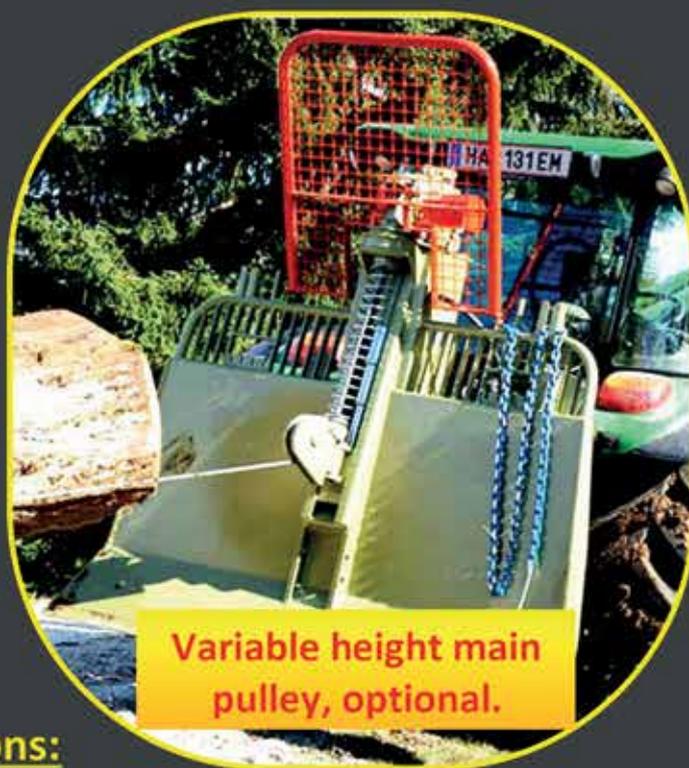
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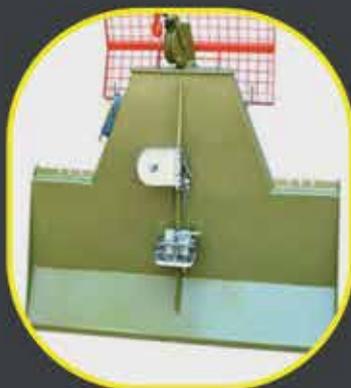
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The world needs us to succeed



Ross Hampton, CEO of the Australian Forest Products Association (AFPA), visited the UK in March at the invitation of James Jones & Sons. He reflects on the global need for timber and what that means for the forest industry.

If I learnt one thing on my recent mission to the UK, it's that our main challenge as forest industries is the same the world over: we need more trees, and we need them urgently. The demand for timber and fibre products is growing fast, but the increase in supply of the raw material is barely moving. We absolutely must turbo charge growth of the productive estate.

As I spoke with policy makers and industry leaders in London, Edinburgh and Rome, I also confirmed something quite profound which makes this goal of increasing the production tree estate truly a global imperative.

We know the demand for timber and fibre products is trending upwards. What we are now seeing, however, is climate action policies slamming the demand accelerator to the floor.

All over the world, nations are banking on more timber and wood fibre to do the heavy lifting in our urgent drive to reduce emissions. They are throwing the (wooden) kitchen sink at it. More mass timber in construction, demands that airlines switch to sustainable aviation fuels, plastics being banned in favour of fibre, clothing manufacturers being urged to get out of polyester and into rayon – it's a growing list.

But the sobering fact is those same nations are largely failing to consider the obvious: where is the additional fibre for all

these wonderful uses going to come from?

The World Bank, Indufor, WWF, Grøhnsam House, FAO, and many others are now predicting demand will triple or even quadruple by 2050.

So where is the equivalent tripling of supply? Where are the policies to ensure this happens in a sustainable way that works carefully with rural communities, and especially with Indigenous forest-based communities?

In Scotland, I was delighted to find real concern to play a meaningful part in this global challenge from the Minister down. The afforestation targets of Scotland do include aspirations around timber production, as well as trees for climate action, biodiversity and amenity. In too many other developed nations they seem to be wearing blinkers.

Policy makers suggest to me that local resource growth isn't needed because if they run short at home, the timber can always come across the wharves from 'overseas'. The problem is that will increasingly mean places where soaring market prices incentivise unscrupulous operators to drive roads deeper into primary forests in the Congo and southeast Asia, increasing deforestation. Interpol already rates timber as the world's second largest illegal global trade.

We need to shake the world out of its

'timber supply complacency'. We need a global ambition and ultimately a pledge, signed up to by nations which have the capacity to grow fibre at increasing scale.

We urgently need policies to encourage growth in the millions of small-scale agro-forests; sophisticated market mechanisms to attract the trillions in pension funds and reward landowners who wish to increase sustainable timber production. We need more productivity from the vast natural or native forests and significantly more planted forests.

As I say to policy makers, who often raise eyebrows when one mentions plantations, their job should be to create settings which deliver the "right trees at the right scale in the right place for the right purpose". A broadleaf forest planted next to a softwood sawmill makes no sense, and neither does a Sitka spruce plantation five hundred expensive miles from the same sawmill.

Confor, AFPA and other Timber, Paper and Forestry bodies will be shouting all this from the rafters at COP27 in Egypt. Wish us luck. The world needs us to succeed.

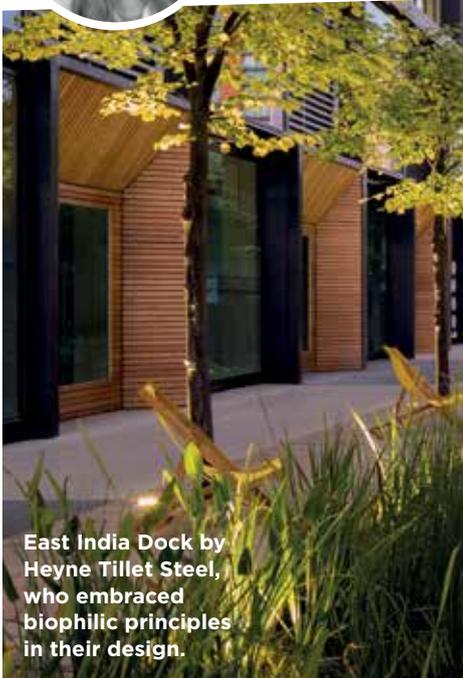
Ross Hampton is CEO AFPA & Chair of the UN FAO Advisory Committee on Sustainable Forest-Based Industries (ACSFBI).



Campaign Manager, **Sarah Virgo**, looks at the wellbeing impact of wood in the built environment.



Image credit: Dirk Linder



East India Dock by Heyne Tillet Steel, who embraced biophilic principles in their design.

Wood for healthy buildings

You may have heard of forestry bathing – a Japanese practice that simply involves immersing yourself in the calm and quiet amongst trees to encourage relaxation and boost health and wellbeing. But did you know these same feelings and benefits can be achieved through the use of wood in the design of our spaces?

Wood for Good and BE-ST (formerly Construction Scotland Innovation Centre) recently supported the first of a series of events from the Transforming Timber project on health and wellbeing in the built environment in May 2022.

The first webinar focused on the science of healthy buildings, looking at the evidence behind biophilic design and the techniques required to create a space that enhances users' wellbeing. We were delighted to have Bill Browning, Elina Grigoriou and Tabitha Binding speak on the principles of biophilic practices and discuss how we can use user profiles and experiential mapping to identify where use of specific materials can enhance occupants' wellbeing.

Wood for Good focuses on promoting wood as a material for its 'good' qualities: its ability to sequester and store carbon, fighting climate change, its role in sustainable, thriving forest systems, its strength and beauty in design and its biophilic properties, the way it makes occupants feel and improves their wellbeing.

This webinar series is an opportunity for others to learn more about how wood

can be used to enhance the experience of wellbeing in the built environment.

Wood = alive

Bill Browning, who is a prolific strategist, author and speaker on green buildings and biophilia, and Co-Founder of Terrapin Bright Green, spoke about a recent paper, *The Nature of Wood: An exploration of the science of biophilic responses to wood*, which outlines the research behind why humans love wood as a material.

He explained that we subconsciously link wood as a material to trees, which we then link to nature and life. Researchers have also proven that the smell of wood can produce a calming feeling, and that the repetitive patterns of woodgrain are pleasing to the brain.

Understanding users is the key

Both Elina and Bill drove home understanding that what occupants desire and

intend to use a space for is crucial when designing a healthier space. Elina, founder of Grigoriou Interiors and well-known wellbeing expert, author and speaker, took us through some of the processes she uses to identify what wellbeing means to a user. Wellbeing is unique to every individual and the way that they approach their design reflects this.

Healthy buildings in a healthy world

Tabitha Binding, Head of Education and Engagement at Timber Development UK (TDUK), asked the question: can we truly have healthy buildings if they aren't also contributing to a healthy planet?

This is an area where wood is undeniably the best solution for the built environment. In addition to helping lower the embodied carbon value of a building, timber and natural materials in the built environment can help with regulating temperature and improving air quality for occupants.

Learning more Discover more about the webinars on the Wood for Good website (www.woodforgood.com/news-and-views), alongside further resources and upcoming interviews with the speakers. We also have an array of case studies and informative articles on the power of biophilic design.

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Tubex marks 35 years of production at flagship facility

Tubex, the UK's leading manufacturer of tree shelters, is celebrating 35 years of production at its site in Aberdare, Wales. To mark this milestone, key stakeholders and influencers from the forestry sector gathered to see Tubex's manufacturing processes first-hand. Confor's National Manager in Wales, **Anthony Geddes**, was invited to attend.

The anniversary comes at a time of significant growth for Tubex, a brand of Berry Global, due to growing awareness of the need for widespread tree planting. Mike Carroll, Commercial Director at Berry, explained that the scale of the increase, combined with the demands placed on logistics services, made 2021 an extremely busy year with record orders and demand.

In order to secure consistent supply for the 2022 planting season, Tubex has received investment from Berry to better support customers through increased stock, capacity, automation and sustainability. This will mean more inventory available directly from suppliers to support the current flexing nature of tree planting.

With the focus on developing sustainable robust products, Tubex's Aberdare site is leading the drive towards full circularity in tree shelter manufacture. During the tour of the manufacturing plant, Tubex's Marketing and Product Development Director, James Taylor, explained that by achieving up to 35% recycled content in its core range, there is a clear pathway towards 100% within the coming years. Indeed, other products in the Tubex range are already fabricated from entirely recycled materials.

This is supported by Tubex's Collection and Recycling Scheme, which ensures responsible disposal of tree shelters, and closes the loop to increase the usage of recycled content. The scheme ran as a trial throughout 2021 and, moving into 2022, the simplicity and ease of access has proven a real success.

For those who have experienced the munching abilities of rabbits and deer, to say nothing of the extremes of British weather, tree shelters are vital for saplings to grow to their full potential. Each shelter dramatically increases a sapling's survival rate. This is now more important than ever when considering seed supply and tree availability.

As a nation, we cannot afford to waste trees and with many nurseries running low on common species last winter, consideration must be given to what the implications for beat up on high density and non-protected schemes will be.



Tree shelters produced by Tubex are distributed across the country, both supporting the UK Government's ambitious tree planting targets and meeting private forestry demands driven by corporate sustainability agendas. Over the past three decades, an estimated 150 million tonnes of CO2 have been sequestered globally by trees protected by Tubex's tree shelters.

While these vital products have been the mainstay of the business since opening in 1987, the Aberdare facility played a different role during the Covid-19 pandemic. The state-of-the-art site pivoted and switched its efforts to producing protective materials used in over 170 million FFP3 masks for NHS workers.

Dean Latten, Site Director at Tubex, has

worked at the Aberdare facility for 20 years and witnessed the company's growth.

"35 years of production is a massive achievement for any business - and to celebrate it at a time when demand for tree shelters is continuing to rise is a real source of pride to the Tubex team," he commented. "It was fantastic to welcome so many influential figures to Aberdare to demonstrate the work we're doing to support sustainability through the manufacture, collection and recycling of our products."

Tubex will be one of the exhibitors at the Royal Welsh Agricultural Show. Visit the Confor Forestry Expo Marquee between the 18-22 July to have a conversation about your upcoming projects and recycling needs.

New grant to help modernise domestic tree production in England

A new £8.8 million fund has been opened by the Forestry Commission, in partnership with Defra, to support domestic tree production in England.

Tree nurseries and suppliers may apply for up to £175,000 in grant funding for projects to improve, expand, automate or mechanise their operations. For example, a successful project may propose investing in new transplanting systems and grading machines or improved polytunnel infrastructure and irrigation systems.

The money, which can be used to cover up to 50% of project costs, will come from the Tree Production Capital Grant as part of the Government's £750 million Nature for Climate Fund.



Photo credit: Tree Please Nursery, Corbridge

Forestry Minister Lord Goldsmith said: "With demand for trees set to grow dramatically over the coming years as we pursue our ambitious tree planting targets, fostering a robust forestry industry is critical.

"Supporting the sector with this new funding will safeguard sapling supply chains, create new green jobs and help to

realise our long-term vision for our trees and woodlands."

The Tree Production Capital Grant is open to tree seed and sapling suppliers of all sizes, as well as new entrants looking to diversify into the sector.

Applications are open until Thursday 30 June.



Photo credit: Forestry England

Pilot requirement for tree suppliers comes into effect

New qualifiers for funding under the England Woodland Creation Offer and the Future Farming Tree Health Pilot are now in effect.

Applicants must commit to sourcing their trees from suppliers who are either accredited under the Plant Healthy Certification Scheme, or who have passed a Ready to Plant assessment from Fera Science Ltd.

The new Biosecure Procurement Requirement for the forestry sector is being piloted to combat threats from pests and diseases and further strengthen UK biosecurity, fulfilling a commitment within the

England Trees Action Plan.

"Our nation's biosecurity will be integral to the success of our tree planting ambitions," said Forestry Commission Chair Sir William Worsley. "This pilot will ensure that the forestry sector plays its role in upholding rigorous standards of biosecurity and in doing so, safeguards our much-loved trees and forests for generations to come."

The threat of pests and disease is growing as a result of globalisation and climate change. Introducing the Biosecure Procurement Requirement now will address these risks to our biosecurity, minimise the net loss to our existing treescape, and

serve to realise long-term goals for our trees and woodlands.

This pilot will enable suppliers to demonstrate that their operational practices comply with the industry benchmark Plant Health Management Standard. This Standard includes protocols which are key to developing a robust plant health management system and sets out practical requirements for suppliers to help protect the plant supply chain.

For more information on the Biosecure Procurement Pilot Requirement, visit the Forestry Commission blog (www.forestry-commission.blog.gov.uk).

Funding better roads in northeast England



Northern England looks enviously towards the shape of timber transport in Scotland, writes **Dr Mike Yerbury**.

The strategic, collaborative and forward-thinking approach to improving the movement of timber on rural roads in Scotland is something we hope to mirror in Cumbria and Northumberland.

We have a way to go, but the wheels are turning as we look to create a strategic fund aimed at improving weak roads likely to see large numbers of timber movements over the coming 5-10 years.

Last year, I was appointed Chair of the Cumbria and Northeast England Timber Transport Group. We have started to build on existing relationships with all relevant stakeholders needed to create a Strategic Timber Transport Fund for our region, using the Scottish model as a measure of strong success.

Working with the public and private forestry and wood processing sectors, timber hauliers, local authorities and politicians, we aim to establish a pilot scheme to generate a small initial fund for upgrading specific roads within the region.

Industry engagement is essential for us to gain knowledge of the priority roads, so pulling planned exit point information on proposed forest operations over the next five years will help us develop the concept.

Like Scotland, we will identify those roads which have a number of landown-

ers looking to mobilise quantities of timber from their remote forests. Typically, the roads with the highest priorities tend to be C roads, or even unclassified roads, which have a weak structure as they have predominantly served only scattered local communities.

With restricted funds made available to local authorities to improve rural road networks, money will be spent on roads with the highest priority and impact on the wider communities within the region. However, that leaves limited potential for some forest areas so access to an alternative fund, designed specifically to improve access into forests, seems a great way to go.

If we are successful in convincing the UK Government to support the initiative, potentially through funds allocated as part of the Levelling Up agenda, and match-fund that with industry funds, that could make a big difference. The local authority is then able to support rural economic growth by allowing more efficient removal of timber from forests to local wood processors, all with relatively minor investment.

There are also obvious benefits to those small rural communities using these roads, which will be in a much better condition should they get improved.

In some cases, as we have seen in south-

ern Scotland, it might even be possible to bypass very small communities as we take timber lorries around villages rather than through them.

We hope to identify a relatively small sum of money, maybe £1 million, for a pilot scheme to demonstrate benefits for local communities, local authorities, and the economy - not to mention the environmental benefits of bringing more sustainable timber to market.

Northumberland County Council has engaged very positively with our group (at both political and administrative levels), and we are working to help the local authority better understand timber movements on the region's roads - and demonstrate the benefits of a strategic timber transport fund.

Guy Opperman MP, who I know well from his engagement with EGGER's wood-based panel manufacturing operation in his Hexham constituency, has been very supportive and we are working with him and fellow MPs to better understand funding options.

We are committed to continued engagement with all stakeholders to create a strategic fund. The area needs one and we want to mirror the successful proactive approach to timber transport in Scotland.

We want to improve our rural public road network and help minimise the impact of timber transport when mobilising timber from our forest resource. Our aim is to help create transport infrastructure fit for the 21st century.

If we can create a Strategic Timber Transport Fund in the north of England, we're convinced we will see very clear benefits for our communities, our environment and our rural economy.

Dr Mike Yerbury is Director of EGGER Forestry and Chair of the Cumbria and Northeast England Timber Transport Group.

Glencoe, Scotland



Photo credit: www.shutterstock.com/Daniel_Kay



Parcels of quality timber

An issue sometimes facing the smaller woodland owner is making up a worthwhile parcel of timber to offer to market. This can be acute when it comes to decent logs of good quality hardwoods.

Are there enough and what can be done?

INGREDIENTS OF QUALITY

The first question is defining quality and there are several ingredients. First, some species command better prices than others. For example, oak is almost always superior to beech, and well-grown cherry or sycamore to birch.

Among conifers we know Red Cedar is in great demand, and Douglas Fir is almost always readily saleable whereas parcels of pine may be harder to shift. There are, though, local markets which can affect this general pattern.

The second ingredient is quality of the trunk, meaning its straightness, freedom from defects, and amount of branching. Tall, well-grown cherry may appear outstanding – straight with few branches – but if older than around 70 years, it can often suffer pipe-rot. And oak, for example, on sandy or gravelly soils is much more prone to shake (star or ring-shaped cracks running up from the base).

The third aspect is size itself (diameter) and length to ‘crown break’. Cutting beams from oak requires longer lengths, though not necessarily very big diameters, compared for some other products. A sawmill will sometimes not cut large dimension material, such as very large logs from coastal grown radiata pine or redwoods, that are too big for their bandsaw.

This all seems very technical but in reality, as you get to know your woodland, you soon get your eye in for straight, decent sized trunks of desirable species. But do they make a worthwhile parcel?

PARCEL SIZE AND PRESENTATION

I visited Vasterne Sawmills in Wiltshire recently and was reminded that an absolute minimum is a lorry load. Interestingly beam oak, provided the trunks are pretty straight, need be no more than 45-50 cm mid-diameter. Obviously, this is one example, but when thinking about assembling a parcel do discuss with the contractor (or whoever is doing the tree felling) if a parcel of several logs can be presented on the ground.

This last point is not usually needed for conifers (say Douglas Fir or Cedar) but is important for almost all quality hardwoods. Logs are presented at ride side so that the



The finest quality oak in my wood: DBH 80cm, 9m to first branch, but now damaged in the crown by Storm Eunice

buyer can inspect for defects before making an offer. They are also often measured in traditional ‘hoppus feet’: that’s another story for another article.

CONTRACTOR AND PURCHASERS

Most smaller woodland owners employ contractors to undertake thinnings and fellings, and often to also do the marketing so the trees are sold standing. In short, the contractor buys the trees where they are in the wood and is responsible for cutting, converting and taking to market.

I have found that if a contractor is working in your wood, such as a standard thinning operation, then adding in some

top-quality material is often attractive for them; it sweetens the parcel. In the case of hardwood logs, you can ask the contractor to harvest and assemble at ride side before agreeing a price or pay them for this prior to offering to market separately and looking for a purchaser.

IN SUMMARY

If you have several decent trees that will make up a lorry load of logs, then it can be well worth offering them to market. You still need a felling licence of course, as with any other harvesting operation, but you may have a nice surprise in what you wood earns. Current timber prices are good.

Meet your new editor

Confor's new Communications Manager, **Eleanor O'Neill**, reflects on her first edition of FTN as Editor



Working on this issue of Forestry & Timber News has been something of a return to my roots.

Though I may be a new inductee to the world of productive woodlands, land management, troublesome squirrels and timber goods, I started my career writing for magazines and niche publications while finding my feet as a student journalist.

Admittedly, reporting on comic book conventions and interviewing crime novelists seems a far cry from forest markets and timber transport routes, but there's a hint of nostalgia nonetheless.

My professional career has been comprised of editorial and marketing roles and, at my heart, I am and always have been a storyteller. Whether that's imparting the trials and successes of an individual's journey through interviews, or crafting the narrative and messaging of a brand, my

strengths lie in using words to share something meaningful.

As such, the chance to contribute to Confor's voice at this exciting time in the industry is an incredible opportunity, and a challenge which I hope to prove equal to.

Since stepping into the shoes of Communications Manager in April, I have learned so much about the work of Confor Members and the realities facing forestry and timber outfits across the UK and beyond. Planting targets, wood shortages and the impacts of climate change have all evolved from subjects on which I knew very little, to the centrepieces of those stories I am putting out into the world.

In this magazine alone, we've explored the innovative work being done to reduce emissions and lock up carbon, the technologies being used to ensure the future of this industry, and the push to commu-

nicate the need for large scale planting to stakeholders at the highest level.

I know Forestry & Timber News is a well-respected and much beloved publication for Members and the wider sector. Going forward, I hope to build on that reputation and ensure FTN remains a valuable resource for current and future readers alike.

My sincerest thanks go to all those who contributed to this issue and have helped me find my feet in this new role. I look forward to the next chapter.

Contact If you would like to write for the magazine or have an idea for editorial content, please get in touch at FTN@confor.org.uk.

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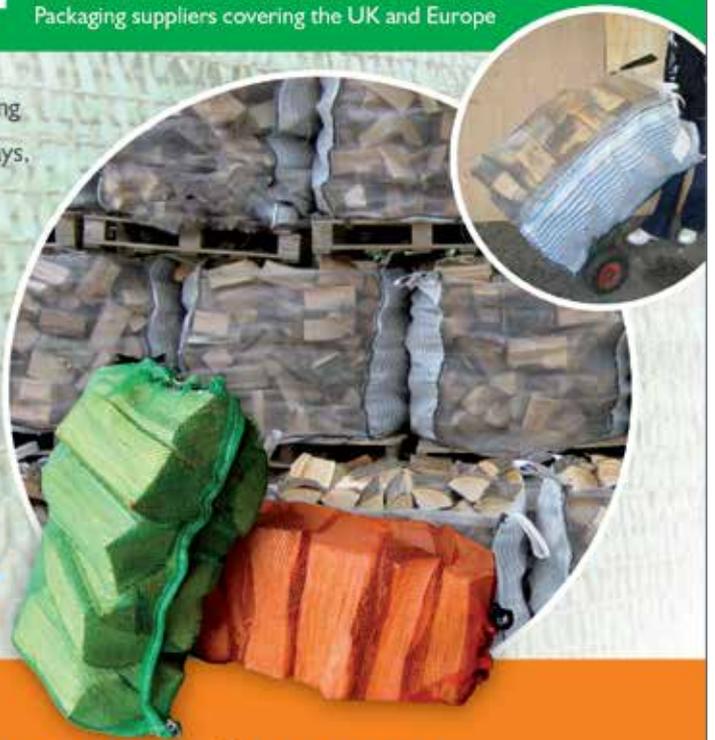
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“It’s important to have these visits from people like the Cabinet Secretary as it gives us the opportunity to showcase what we are all about and discuss future growth plans.”

Oliver Stephen, Mill Manager for BSW Timber in Fort William, commenting on a visit from Kate Forbes MSP during Scottish Apprenticeship Week.

Want to see your picture here?

Forestry in Pictures is a regular feature in FTN. For every issue, we select the most impacting photograph sent by a reader. If you have a photo you would like to see published here, please send your file to ftn@confor.org.uk. Please include your name, a short comment text to go with the picture, and an image credit.

Photos should relate to forestry and timber and be of high-quality (minimum resolution 300dpi). Exceptional pictures might be considered for the front cover of a future FTN issue.

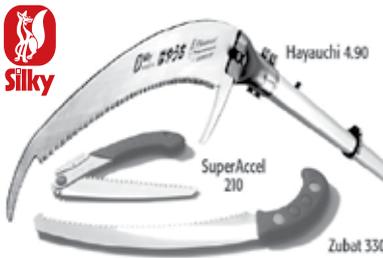
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COMING UP IN AUGUST 2022 – GET INVOLVED

In August, it’s time for a big APF preview! Confor members, get in touch with stories about product launches or exciting activities you are organising for this year’s show. Remember that FTN is your magazine – get in touch if you want to suggest editorial or give us feedback on articles we have published in the past. Confor members, send us your company’s news updates or pitches for feature articles. Note that our general editorial deadline for the August FTN is 10 July 2022. If you would like to pitch an article idea, please do so by the end of June 2022.

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