



# Confor South

Promoting forestry and wood  
Hyrwyddo coedwigaeth a choed

An update for Confor members in Wales and southern England

30 September 2019



A report of the Confor Woodland Show is in the October issue of *Forestry and Timber News*.



Confor members took part in the Global Youth Strike for the Climate on 20 September by going on twitter with examples of how their work as 'carbon managers' in forestry and timber helps to tackle climate change directly: #TheFutureIsForestry


**Caroline Ayre** @EnglandConfor  
My daughter is supporting today's #climatestrike & tackling #climateemergency by helping to ensure we plant more trees, manage our woods better and use more timber. This is a simple, low-cost way to remove carbon from the atmosphere & store it. #TheFutureIsForestry #tinyforester





**Lockhart Garratt Ltd** @LockhartGarratt  
John Lockhart is on his way to @HarperAdamsUni to present the 'Lockhart Garratt Excellence in Forestry Award' at their Graduation Ceremony. Congratulations to all the winners. (Trophy hand-turned by John himself).



**Simon Place MCFor** @PlaceMCFor  
@forestsandwood Look up to the trees for wildlife, timber, people and carbon 🌲👏  
#ClimateStrike #ClimateAction #ForestFriday #TheFutureIsForestry #forestry #timber #carboncapture



**Forest Surveys** @forestsurvey  
Global temperatures from 1850-2017  
The colour scale represents the change in global temperatures covering 1.35°C  
Planting and increasing our forests is key to mitigating this change.  
#climatestrike #futureisforestry



**Bangor Uni Forestry** @BUForestry  
we had a great morning in the @BangorUni #outdoor classroom with @nationaltrust @BFSA\_forestry @JamesDWalmsley @Timothaki learning all about #woodland #management #conservation #greenwoodworking #traditional #skills #landscape #timber #tree #ecology #thefutureisforestry



**Graham Ormondroyd** @woodcriman  
Replying to @forestsandwood @MmaLeticia and 9 others  
Spreading the knowledge of the benefits of timber both home and abroad... #climatestrike #ClimateEmergency #theFutureIsForestry #thinkglobalplantlocal



**TomorrowsForests** @TomorrowsForest  
We are supporting today's #climatestrike by maintaining a new woodland creation site that was planted over winter. This upcoming winter season we will be planting over 250,000 native british trees into new woodland creation sites.  
#confor #climatechange #ExtinctionRebellion



**Nicola Abbott** @nicabbatt  
Out and about last week looking at improving wildlife habitat and managing native woodland for sustainable timber production. Well managed woodlands and using timber products help combat climate change too!  
#TheFutureIsForestry #ClimateStrike #ClimateEmergency



	Caroline Ayre: England	Anthony Geddes: Wales
Week beginning	Diary dates	
2 Sep	Confor Woodland Show	
9 Sep	Annual leave	Confor update at TIMCON AGM
	ELMS Deep Dive – National Pilot	National Forest planning meeting
	Deer Initiative Board	
16 Sep	Upland stakeholder forum for England & Wales	Annual leave
	UK Squirrel Accord Committee	
	Applicants Focus Group	
	Forestry Skills Forum	
23 Sep	Confor Marches Committee, Ludlow	
	Confor North Committee, Penrith	Confor Wales Committee
	Confor South East Committee, Windsor	
	Meeting Woodland Trust South West on woodland creation targets	Meeting Woodland Trust & RFS on future of land use consultation.
	National FC/ Private Sector meeting (p.7)	
30 Sep	BEIS Bio-innovation workshop	Brexit Roundtable
		<i>P. ramorum</i> operational response team
7 Oct		Independent Environmental Advisory Panel to Dwr Cymru Welsh Water
		NRW forestry visit to Llandegla
14 Oct	Cornwall Forest Meeting	Woodland Strategic Advisory Panel
	Nursery Producers' Group	
	Tree Charter Board	
21 Oct	Safety, Technical and Compliance England & Wales	NRW Estates
		Young Professionals – NRW/ FR
	Confor Business Planning Day	
28 Oct	Confor Wood Processors meeting	Wales Water Management Forum
	DR Company Board	
Key work areas		
<p><b>Environmental Land Management Scheme (ELMS)</b> – Co-designing future land management grant schemes. (p.7)</p> <p><b>Plant health</b> – detailed and ongoing input on Oak Processionary Moth, <i>Ips typographus</i>, Xylella, Ash dieback, Grey squirrels and Deer. (p.3)</p> <p><b>New Forestry Minister</b> – building relationships with Zac Goldsmith.</p> <p><b>Woodland creation and management</b> – I am leading on a campaign to increase levels of new productive woodland creation and management in England.</p>		<p><b>Glastir</b> – Drawing government attention to gap in funding commitment and ongoing low planting numbers. Working with RPW to identify where improvements can be made to speed up approvals. (p.5)</p> <p><b>Regulation and legislation</b> – Working with NRW on Welfare Units and awaiting publication of FISA guidance note (p.7). Ash Dieback (p.6)</p> <p><b>Future policy</b> – Responding to consultation on future of land use (p.6). Co-designing Welsh Government Forestry Industry Strategy (p.7).</p>

## Confor news

*Eleanor Harris*

### A fund for our future?

Confor CEO Stuart Goodall has been exploring the potential for an Industry Fund. Many of our counterparts around the world have introduced a fund or levy to deliver priorities of shared value to the whole sector.

Confor is preparing a prospectus setting out in detail how the fund would work, what activities it could support, what benefits it should deliver, and provide answers to questions that have been raised. This will become the basis for formal consultation with the industry.

Stuart held a discussion about the fund at the Confor Woodland Show, the first in a series of events around the UK. Confor members are encouraged to attend and provide input to ensure the prospectus is as comprehensive as possible.

More detail on the fund, and a Q&A with the head of the New Zealand levy system, are in the October issue of *Forestry and Timber News*.

### New Confor Chair

At the Confor AGM on 27 August 2019. John Kissock OBE was appointed Chair of Confor in succession to Athole McKillop. John is well known in the UK forestry and forest products sector, having been joint Managing Director of James Jones & Sons Ltd until his retirement in 2007. John has also been a Director of TRADA, Wood for Good and UKFPA. An interview with John is in *Forestry and Timber News*.

### Forestry Statistics

The 2019 edition of Forest Research's *Forestry Statistics and Forestry Facts and Figures* was released on 26 September. This contains figures on woodland creation, timber use and trade, carbon and wildlife, employment and recreation, and international forestry. The statistics

are available on the [Forest Research Website](#).

Forestry Statistics is currently being reviewed to provide greater value to users. If you would like to contribute your views to the review, please complete the [on-line survey](#).

### Forestry Skills Forum

The England and Wales Forestry Skills Forum includes Confor, ICF, RFS, Forest Education Network, Sylva, and other organisations covering everything from primary schools to further education. It is working towards a skills action plan for each area.

The forum is developing a web portal at [www.careersinforesstry.org.uk](http://www.careersinforesstry.org.uk)

Confor collaborates with others to work on industry skills including wood in construction, forest machine operator training, CPD, wood and tree health, and nurseries.

## Plant health

*Caroline Ayre*

### Phytophthora ramorum

The annual programme of helicopter flights to assess the spread of *P. ramorum* has been completed having been held up by the *Ips* outbreak. Early indications from some parts of the country suggest that the situation may be similar to last year, with infection generally in proximity to previously confirmed infections. Suspect trees seen from the air are inspected and tests carried out to confirm the presence of the disease.

### Dendroctonus micans

Confor will be writing to all members to ask for a contribution towards the breeding programme for *Rhizophagus grandis* the predatory beetle of the larvae of *D. micans*. *D. micans* continues to be a threat and parts of Northern France have been decimated by the beetle.

### Oak Lace Bug

Defra published emergency regulations proposing to ban the import of all roundwood of oak and Sweet chestnut due to Oak Lace Bug. Our hardwood milling members highlighted the significant economic impact this would have on them. Confor helped coordinate a meeting with the mills and Forestry Commission, and submitted a response to the consultation and critical analysis to the Pest Risk Assessment. The additional information supplied by the mills and Confor significantly undermines the conclusions drawn by Defra's Plant Health Team.

### Plant passporting

Discussions are continuing on the introduction of practical measures for Plant Passporting, which comes into force on 14 December 2019. Our focus remains on ensuring a reasonable, practical, proportionate and risk-based approach by plant health authorities in England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland.

Plant passports will be required for the movement of:

- roundwood of all conifers, Sweet Chestnut and Plane
- bulk bark, brash and wood chipped on site
- Christmas trees over 3 metres and decorative foliage from such trees.

Sawdust, wood chips containing bark and slabwood with bark from sawmills to other sites are currently considered to be a lower risk and are not expected to require Plant Passports.

Plant passporting is already operating in the UK nursery/ plant trade, focussed on traceability of wood with bark.

The Plant Passporting Technical Working Sub-Group continues to meet regularly and is focussing on practical implementation and operation of the new measures. Plant Passports can be incorporated within delivery advice notes, avoiding the need for a separate

document. Electronic copies must be retained for at least 3 years. Companies responsible for issuing Plant Passports will have to be registered with and authorised by Forestry Commission England, (acting on behalf of the public forestry bodies in Scotland and Wales). Details of the registration, authorisation and inspection process and associated fees are awaited.

### Plant Health Assurance Scheme

In response to the critical threat posed by *Xylella Fastidiosa* and other plant health risks, Confor and the HTA are developing the PHAS. It is being designed to mitigate, protect, and potentially compensate horticulture businesses from the risks posed by a serious plant health incident.

The October issue of Confor members' magazine *Forestry and Timber News* includes a special feature on all you need to know on Plant Passporting, and information on *Ips typographus*.



## WALES NEWS

*Anthony Geddes*

### Glastir

In April 2019 Glastir Woodland Creation opened for 5 weeks instead of the normal 8, with £1m funding for roughly 230 hectares of planting.

At close of the expressions of interest (EOI), there were applications for 2600 hectares totalling about £11.8m. This exceeds the Welsh Government target of 2000 hectares by 30%.

The obstacle to tree planting is not land availability or farmer opposition. Four months after EOIs closed, Rural Payment Wales have not responded to any of the plans. There is now not enough time to plan these schemes for 2019/2020 planting season and therefore a strong possibility that, in the face of climate emergency, no trees will be planted in Wales this winter.

I have written to the head of forest policy and deputy director of land and environment in Welsh Government to detail the above points. I was originally advised that EOI responses would be complete by end of August 2019. As this is not the case, I have again written asking why this is and requesting the situation be expedited.

I am working with CLA and Woodland Trust to develop a joint press release regarding this failure.

### Natural Resources Wales

#### Timber Lorry Overloading

- NRW discontinued the self-policing system on 1 August 2019 and introduced a 44 tonne limit with no industry consultation or accounting for equipment accuracy

Confor immediately raised its concerns about these unconsulted changes. NRW have advised they have had issues with operators consistently in the 44-45t zone with instances of illegal loading over 45t.

NRW are gathering statistics on frequency and seriousness of overloading. In July, of 1680 dispatches, 465 were over 44t and 37 over 45t. 29 of these incidences were between two operators. In August there was a marked improvement in performance with 12 loads over 45t and 159 over 44t.

I have requested that NRW approach the small number of persistent offenders first. NRW is continuing to monitor figures and communicate directly with offending hauliers. I am not aware of any contracts being stopped under 45t.

Operators are requested to contact me if this situation changes.

#### Sale frequency & Timber marketing program review

- In August, NRW changed from 6 timber sales p.a. to 5
- A review of the sale program is in progress to deliver the 700,000m<sup>3</sup> committed this financial year
- An internal review is underway on direct production v. standing sale.

NRW are now drafting their timber sales plan to 2022 and I have requested that Confor and the industry are consulted. There is concern about the change from volume to area contracts. I have been advised that the program to update the NRW forest plans does not involve a mensuration update.

If you encounter stand information, volume and breakout types at odds to the physical crop, please let me know and Confor will report any disparity.

I will be proposing solutions to address the poor-quality field data at my next meeting with Clare Pillman, head of NRW.

#### Mineral extraction claims

- Multiple Confor members and NRW struck with claims over use and value of minerals rights
- Confor requested to facilitate a meeting between members and NRW to discuss.

I have scheduled a meeting with NRW and two Confor members to review both parties' positions.

If you have been affected by this matter and would like to be included in the discussion, please contact me.

### Ash dieback

- Widespread Ash dieback is creating a land management and safety issue
- No funding or support for disease management
- Local Government, NRW, Welsh Government and private landowners are not co-ordinating action.

Since the first meeting of the Welsh Strategic Ash Dieback Group nothing has been issued from Welsh Government or NRW on a course of action to deal with this problem. Several landowners and agents have approached Confor requesting advice and guidance.

Confor has written to the Welsh Local Government Association to propose ways for Public Service Boards, landowners and highway authorities to reduce expensive road closures for dealing with diseased trees.

Recent advice from Defra indicated that funding had been made available to Welsh Government for removal of infected trees. We are investigating this claim.

## Consultations

### Sustainable Farming & Our Land

- Welsh Government has set out proposals for the replacement of Common Agricultural Policy funding, in the document [Sustainable Farming and our Land](#).
- Confor is working on a response by 30 October.

The consultation proposes payments for the creation and maintenance of wildlife habitat, business investment including capital grants and training, increased advice schemes, investment in the Welsh

supply chain, and a clear and integrated regulatory framework.

The consultation is couched strongly in the language of 'farming' although the consultation document states that 'the majority of the discussion equally applies to farmers and other land managers'. There are also hints that the word 'food' refers to 'produce' in a wider sense, including timber.

However, this is not clear, and Confor will be seeking reassurance as to which parts of the proposals include or exclude forestry.

Confor will be meeting with Woodland Trust, RFS and ICF to discuss our responses, and draft a strong and cohesive joint response.

### National Development Framework (NDF)

- This consultation considers a complete land-use framework and integrated decision-making process.
- It does not appear to recognise that farming and forestry underpin Welsh landscapes and habitats.

Confor is reviewing this document which sets out future policy for investment in land use, and commentary on the proposed National Forest.

Further detail will be made available to members once the draft response to consultation document has been developed.

## Welsh Government

### Woodland for Wales Indicators

- Welsh Government are updating the Woodland for Wales Indicators and propose to exclude the industry data.
- Confor is strongly resisting this.

Industry data is of low quality and significantly out of date, and I have been working with Welsh Government to find solutions to update it. Unfortunately, the time available is too short for the November publication. Confor will keep pressure on Welsh Government to

procure the information and include Forestry Sector indicators in 2020.

#### National Forest

- First Minister keen to deliver National Forest manifesto commitment.
- Woodland Strategic Advisory Panel tasked with guiding proposals.
- Project currently in discover phase till March 2020.

Confor sits on the WSAP task and finish group which initially struggled with the vagueness of the brief for a national forest. The concept has now been clarified as a Wales-wide national forest program.

Confor believes this must be in addition, and not a distraction from the need for a successful private sector woodland creation program.

The group will report to WSAP on 14 October.

### Forest Industry Strategy

A Forest Industry Strategy is required to draw together actions required across the supply chain to increase a sustainable supply of structural grade timber. Confor is currently reviewing Scottish and Irish documents to produce a draft outline.

### Health and Safety

#### Forest Welfare Units

- HSE in Wales are prioritising provision of welfare units on active forest sites.
- Three versions of grab tanks have been provided for HSE scrutiny and not met required standard.
- FISA position statement due imminently.

Members have challenged FISA to support their interests with HSE. FISA have led discussion with welfare unit providers and HSE to identify solutions. NRW have just drafted their own policy and Confor have requested they engage with industry to ensure that private and public standards are aligned.

## ENGLAND NEWS

*Caroline Ayre*



*Caroline meeting with private and public sector representatives, in Confor members Duchy of Cornwall woodlands in Herefordshire, to discuss key issues including Countryside Stewardship and plant health.*

### Development of Environmental Land Management, the new English rural payments scheme

Confor is closely involved in the development of the Defra's new Environmental Land Management Scheme (ELM).

This flagship programme aims to ensure that rural payments reward land managers for 'public goods' not currently rewarded by the marketplace, such as carbon, biodiversity and access.

Defra developed a timetable for transition away from CAP-style funding, with an annual decrease in hectare payments while the ELM programme was introduced. The challenge is to design schemes which deliver robust public goods sufficiently cost-effectively, while providing land managers with financial rewards through a sufficiently straightforward process to attract them to enter the scheme.

Confor is closely involved in the development of the scheme through the 'tests & trials' programme.

Short 'tests' and more comprehensive 'trials' are underway. An assessment of the existing agri-environment scheme provides a starting evidence base; and tests & trials aim to develop new elements. The question is not whether interventions bring about environmental outcomes: the actions are based on existing evidence. Rather, the test is whether mechanisms such as land management plans, advice and guidance, payments, spatial prioritisation, collaboration, and other innovative solutions, are effective in changing landowner behaviour.

Initial results from two pioneer projects, in Cumbria and North Devon, revealed low awareness of ELM or natural capital, a wariness of collaboration, and strong support for a two-tier system with a universal payment for widespread environmental practices and local payments for specific interventions. In the Devon trial, which aims to create synergies between environmental and business opportunities, only 15% of farmers had a written business plan.

18 further tests & trials have gone out to contract and should begin imminently with a further 30 to be issued shortly. Common themes are land management plans, natural capital, innovative approaches, standards, and self-assessment techniques. They include a private sector/ Forestry Commission project exploring what needs to be included in a land management plan from a forestry aspect and how this information will be gathered. Lockhart Garratt, Pryor and Rickett and Andy Poore are taking this trial forward.

Following the tests & trials period, a National Pilot based on a land management plan is scheduled to be launched in 2021, with the full scheme launching in 2024. Tests & trials will continue to develop new refinements and opportunities and there will be an annual call for proposals. Confor urged that the findings of tests and trials be made public so that stakeholders and land managers

can engage with projects relevant to their local area or sector.

ELM will not be the only mechanism by which Defra will aim to hit tree planting targets: it is recognised these need to be addressed before 2024. Separate mechanisms and budgets are being considered, alongside a range of other questions about how ELMS will integrate with other funding streams and government priorities.

### Agricultural Bill

Confor and our members have put a great deal of work into the development of the government's flagship Agriculture Bill, which provides a mechanism for rural support after Brexit and the delivery of the priorities of the 25 Year Environment Plan.

[Confor welcomed the proposal](#) to put the 25 year plan, which includes a target equating to 7,500 hectares of woodland creation in England each year, on a statutory footing.

The bill was deemed to have fallen with the prorogation of parliament on 9 September; but the landmark decision of the Supreme Court on 24 September means that it is still alive.

The bill faces continued uncertainty in the case of the government falling or a general election being called.

### Labour Party Conference



Confor took the issue of tree planting to tackle the climate emergency to the Labour Party Conference. The panel included Sandy Martin MP, who said, 'Commercial forestry, done properly, is the best way of doing that. We need to look at the regulatory regime and the attitude of government'. Mr Martin added that there was 'enormous scope' for using far more timber for building in England. Read the full story on the [Confor website](#).



## Stay up to date

For more information on how rural payments will change when the UK leaves the Common Agricultural Policy, see Defra's [Farming is Changing](#) leaflet.

For information on forestry grants and regulations, sign up to the [Forestry Commission eAlert](#).



## Confor Regional Committees

The Confor North, Marches and South East committees met this month.

Committee business always includes:

- discussion of prices at the market, market conditions and production;
- an update on Confor's activity and an opportunity for members to help guide my priorities as Manager;
- an update from Forestry Commission on grants and regulations
- planning for each region's spring and autumn member events.

All committees are keen to recruit new members and are looking to appoint secretaries to enable myself to focus on

core work. Confor committees can count towards ICF CPD records. If you would like to join, have ideas for members events, or matters you would like to raise, contact myself or your local Chair:

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## Future farming regulation

Defra recently held an event on the Farm Inspection and Regulation Review. Depending on political changes, there may be a full consultation in future. The aim is to maintain the high quality of our natural environment and animal welfare following the end of cross compliance. There is an opportunity to integrate farming, forestry and industry, and achieve compliance through a partnership between business and public sector. Inspections should provide information exchange as well as monitoring compliance.

The Review recommends a new independent regulator for farming and land management. This would need to consider: scale of remit (farming and land management, plant health, animal health and welfare), effectiveness at a national and local level; scope of activities and industries; boundaries and coherence with other regulatory bodies; degree of independence from government.

Conservation organisations are concerned that the process could result in an erosion of environmental standards.

Defra are keen to hear stakeholders' views on their proposals. For more information, visit the [Farm Inspection and Regulation Review](#) pages, and contact [ffcpengagement@defra.gov.uk](mailto:ffcpengagement@defra.gov.uk) if you would like to contribute.

### Landscape review

The government's review into National Parks and AONB's has been published.

It makes six proposals towards 'a new commitment to recovery which puts natural beauty at its core to make all these places special':

1. a new mission for national landscapes
2. regular natural capital assessment
3. strengthened management plans
4. Nature Recovery Networks
5. funding through ELMS (p.7)
6. a strengthened role in planning

The report can be [downloaded here](#).



**#TheFutureIsForestry**  
**ESSAY AND VIDEO PRIZE 2019**

How can farmers and landowners be motivated to plant more trees to deliver a wide range of benefits, especially mitigating climate change?

WIN PRIZES OF £500, £250 and £100 in both the essay and video category

Anyone working in forestry and wood aged 30 or under on November 26th 2019 – or forestry students of any age – can enter

- Entries close: **October 14th 2019**
- Winners announced at Houses of Parliament: **November 26th 2019**
- Email your essay of up to 1500 words to [eleanor@confor.org.uk](mailto:eleanor@confor.org.uk)
- Post your video on YouTube (use #TheFutureIsForestry hashtag) and email a link to [eleanor@confor.org.uk](mailto:eleanor@confor.org.uk)
- Full details: [www.confor.org.uk/news/latest-news/](http://www.confor.org.uk/news/latest-news/)

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## Not yet a member?

Confor is the voice of the forestry and timber sector, and our job is to make sure your voice is heard through our representation in political and technical forums.

For more information, contact Anthony Geddes or Caroline Ayre.

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