

FORESTRY & TIMBER NEWS

August 2021 Issue 106



Forestry
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CONTENTS



COMMUNICATING FORESTRY

- 6** Critical thinking
- 36** The Strive for Clarity: Harnessing Human Nature to Communicate
- 65** Industry to co-deliver Climate Smarter project in Scottish Schools

CONFOR UPDATE 2021

- 10** Confor lobbying and media update
- 12** Update from Caroline Ayre, National Manager for England
- 14** Update from Anthony Geddes, National Manager for Wales
- 17** Update from Jamie Farquhar, National Manager for Scotland
- 19** Update from Richard Hunter, Technical Support and Industry Development Officer

MEMBER PROFILE

- 22** Happy people happy trees

NEWS

- 25** Forestry Commission launches new Tree Production Innovation Fund
- 25** Guidance on Responsibilities for Environmental Protection in Forestry

- 27** Woodsure takes on management of Biomass Suppliers List
- 28** International innovation news
- 54** A round-up of the latest products and services

SEEDS

- 31** CivTech seed innovation to help trees grow with less water
- 34** Forestry England converts Scots pine seed stand for future seed supply

NATURAL CAPITAL

- 32** Navigating the value of Natural capital

HEALTH

- 38** Forest bathing

LEGAL MATTERS

- 41** Public access to woodland

MARKET REPORT

- 43** Forest market continues to move forward
- 46** Update from Oliver Combe

MACHINERY

- 49** Mini/Midi Forwarders

WILDFIRES

- 57** Moorland Wildfire Risk Assessment and Management Planning

PLANT HEALTH

- 59** Update on *p ramorum* on larch in Scotland

PUBLICATIONS

- 62** Timber demand and supply in the UK and new practical guidance on forestry and investments for farmers and landowners

TIMBER

- 66** How wood is evolving

PESTICIDES

- 68** Bracken Control in Forestry with Asulox 2021

TIMBER TRANSPORT

- 70** GB Timber Haulage Survey 2021 – The Lowdown

SMALL WOODLAND OWNER

- 73** Woodland events



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Stronger together



STUART GOODALL
CHIEF EXECUTIVE,
CONFOR

For most of us summer has been a hot and sunny one... at least so far! It's also been a busy one. Demand for wood is strong and imports have struggled to fill the gap, putting pressure on domestic producers. Reports of timber shortages (and timber thefts) have made the news.

This can be seen as an indicator of times to come as UK and global demand for timber increases, and countries struggle to bring more wood to market sustainably. Sectors like construction/housing need to decarbonise and wood is an obvious solution, and demand continues to grow in Asia.

One solution is for the UK to produce more wood, which means planting more productive forests and overcoming obstacles like squirrel damage that undermine efforts to produce more quality hardwoods. Unfortunately, I've been saddened and frustrated to hear of environmental groups arguing for a 'zero sum' game of displacing productive planting with 'native' and offering only modest support to tackle pests. It feels like infighting when as a sector we should be focusing outwards and demonstrating the many solutions we can

provide - net zero, a green recovery from Covid-19, rural jobs, as well as biodiversity and places for people to enjoy nature.

Confor is strengthening its team with a new policy officer who will help us step up our work with politicians and we're also establishing a group, reporting to the Board, which will bring Members and the Confor team together to develop and deliver a new public relations campaign targeted at the media.

Your support, as ever, will be key to us delivering our work.

In a few months' time we will be asking woodland owners and the many small businesses we represent to renew their membership; do please renew straight-away and if you know someone who isn't a Member please tell them to visit our website and join up.

If you need to tell them why, please hand over this copy of FTN where they can read what our national managers and Richard Hunter, our new technical officer, have been busy delivering, with a lot more to come!

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

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Contact stefanie.kaiser@confor.org.uk

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For advertising, contact

Laura Munnings 01502 725866

laura.munnings@micropress.co.uk

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Stuart Goodall
Chief Executive
T: 0131 240 1416
E: stuartg@confor.org.uk



Andy Leitch
Deputy Chief Executive
M: 07881 510171
E: Andy.leitch@confor.org.uk



Stefanie Kaiser
Communications and editor FTN
M: 07538 918834
E: stefanie.kaiser@confor.org.uk



Caroline Ayre
National manager for England
M: 07500 927482
E: caroline@confor.org.uk



Jamie Farquhar
National manager for Scotland
M: 07817 374906
E: jamie.farquhar@confor.org.uk



Anthony Geddes
National manager for Wales
T: 074 94079305
E: anthony@confor.org.uk



Confor head office and editorial office
59 George Street, Edinburgh EH2 2JG



0131 240 1410



info@confor.org.uk



www.confor.org.uk



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CRITICAL THINKING



In a 24/7 information world, where hard-won reputations can be lost through a single misjudged social post, we all need to be able to take the rough with the smooth says **David Lee**

In recent months, the forestry and wood industry has had one of those rougher patches, where a range of different criticisms have been levelled through traditional and social media, and sometimes both simultaneously. These attacks have mainly related to Scotland, which is to be expected as almost 80% of new planting is happening there. However, the lessons about handling negative coverage are generic, and can apply to all kinds of forestry in all parts of the UK.

How to constructively respond to negative media attention?

Confor is well aware that such attacks can lead to businesses who have consulted closely with communities and followed stringent UK Forest Standard guidelines (to the letter and well beyond), to tear their hair out. But how should we, and how do we, respond?

In summary, we engage. We will call out unfounded criticism and counter it with

evidence, and will consistently share clear and positive messages about modern, mixed-species and multi-purpose forestry.

We will talk about the climate change benefits of both tree planting and wood use – and will continue to do so even more loudly as COP26 approaches. We will deploy clear evidence, such as the recent paper by Bangor University which said that commercial forestry can deliver significantly more net carbon benefits than more natural broadleaf systems in the same time period, up to two and a half times more in some cases.

We will talk about the opportunities for forestry and wood to lead a green recovery from Covid-19. We talk about the £1 billion contribution to the Scottish economy that our sector makes, and the 25,000+ jobs it supports.

And we will be positive about the need for a mosaic of new woodland types, but stress that large-scale productive planting has to be part of the mix if we want to make a real positive difference to our

environment and economy.

Global demand for timber is soaring and the UK should boost its domestic wood production to avoid an even higher reliance on imports. Currently, over 80% of the timber we use is imported and we would not want this figure to increase. By producing more timber domestically, we retain more control over sustainable forest management and future timber supply. No-one needs to be told that timber prices are rising rapidly – and at a UK level,

IT'S SO IMPORTANT THAT THE INDUSTRY RESPONDS IN A STRUCTURED, INFORMED AND PROFESSIONAL MANNER TO CRITICISM; WE MUST NOT BE AGGRESSIVE OR OVERLY DEFENSIVE.



MEDIA CRITICISM HAS MAINLY RELATED TO FOUR SPECIFIC THEMES

- 1** An alleged lack of consultation with local communities ahead of planting schemes.
- 2** Claims that the standards applied to modern productive planting are not stringent enough.
- 3** Repeated criticism that Sitka spruce is still over-dominant in planting schemes.
- 4** Attacks on ploughing, with claims that it releases carbon and negates the climate benefits of planting schemes.

the Government must take more responsibility to grow more of our own wood in the coming decades.

Proactive and reactive media work go hand in hand

These messages (and many more, depending on the outlet) are constantly reinforced through Confor's proactive media work (see p17) - and when responding reactively to critical articles. The proactive and reactive work must go hand in hand; if we go entirely onto the defensive and spend all our time putting out fires, then we play into the hands of our critics, we move onto their territory.

Yet at the moment, the need to react to negative coverage of our industry is an immediate priority for Confor. And we recognise that when those criticisms are

levelled at members, not everyone is well-equipped to cope.

It's so important that the industry responds in a structured, informed and professional manner to criticism, using consistent messages and language; we must not be aggressive or overly defensive.

Crisis communications toolkit for members

To ensure this happens, Confor is working with members to provide a crisis communications toolkit. This is to allow members to think about the basics when faced with negative criticism - and to respond appropriately.

There are lots of very simple things you can do to begin with; just having clear contact details on your website so a journalist can send an email or make a call

to a person who knows what to do. We have seen examples where email baskets are not monitored, where there is no clear policy. In those instances, calls and emails can end up bouncing around a business, spreading panic and frustrating the journalist as their deadline approaches.

Tone is also really important - a journalist is always more likely to respond positively to someone who is friendly, approachable and helpful, rather than defensive. There can be a tendency in our industry to assume that journalists have deep knowledge of forestry - in almost all cases, they don't. Most journalists who have contacted Confor recently are generalists and know very little - which is why it is important to always use straightforward, high-level messages about why forestry and wood matters so much to our economy >>



>> and environment.

The crisis communications toolkit also aims to ensure that members and Confor work together effectively. Some queries will be very specific and best dealt with by an individual business, with Confor kept informed and offering support as necessary, whereas others will clearly focus on industry-wide issues where Confor will take the lead.

Disparate attacks rather than a coordinated conspiracy

One tricky challenge is that the criticisms can sometimes morph together - across social media and traditional media, with a dollop of environmental campaigner and celebrity critic (often Chris Packham) thrown in.

When this happens, it is easy to think that there might be a coordinated attack on productive forestry. Confor does not believe this is the case and thinks there are actually a wide range of different motivations for the criticisms - ranging from very localised concerns about tree planting of any kind, to dislike of specific practices (like ploughing) to a simple visceral dislike of conifer species.

Some attacks are designed to undermine productive planting by proxy - for example, the criticism of ploughing on peat soils is often loudest from those who seek to promote greater native planting at the expense of new productive woodlands. Ploughing is a way in, a 'hook' to promote a specific agenda in the media.

Confor's view is that criticism should never be downplayed, and should always be countered effectively - but that a range of disparate attacks must not develop into a sense of conspiracy, or a feeling that everyone is against us.

A reality check

To put things in perspective, well over 30,000 hectares of new woodland have been planted in Scotland over the last

TONE IS ALSO REALLY IMPORTANT - A JOURNALIST IS ALWAYS MORE LIKELY TO RESPOND POSITIVELY TO SOMEONE WHO IS FRIENDLY, APPROACHABLE AND HELPFUL, RATHER THAN DEFENSIVE

three year, with a large productive component - and a strong pipeline of further planting is in place. Members were understandably concerned by the departure of Fergus Ewing as Cabinet Secretary for Rural Economy, as he had been such a staunch supporter of our industry.

However, Confor has had very constructive early engagement with the new minister responsible for forestry, Mairi McAllan MSP, and hopes she will visit a planting site and wood processing facility soon.

Engaging closely with politicians of all parties - and with environmental groups, farmers and indeed all those interested in rural land use - is absolutely vital and must run in conjunction with our proactive and reactive media work. We have to talk to everybody and as Stuart Goodall said in his latest article in the Press & Journal, Confor's doors - and its email baskets - are always open.

Let's not kid ourselves that this criticism of forestry and wood will go away. In the era of 24/7 information overload, it will keep coming.

We just need to be sure that we are readier than ever, with strong and positive arguments, a structured, industry-wide approach - and a real sense of purpose.

ENGAGING WITH JOURNALISTS

What are the best practices for your crisis communication? During these times, it can be stressful and easy to jump to a decision that could cause more harm than good.



- > Have obvious contact information for media or public enquiries on your website - be transparent and approachable
- > Choose a suitable first point of contact and brief them!
- > Use layman's language when dealing with journalists or the public, and find out what their previous knowledge is; it's probably very limited
- > Use evidence and data to substantiate your claims
- > Seek advice from others, strengthen your response by bringing in others within the industry
- > Use positive and optimistic language



- > Be defensive or apologetic
- > Expose unprepared staff members to interrogation by confrontational journalists or members of public
- > Have a blaming or polarising attitude
- > Use very technical language or assume any level of knowledge from journalists
- > Voice opinion/views that are personal to that company or individual or are irrelevant to the situation



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DELIVERING A CLEAR MESSAGE

Talking to politicians about forestry and wood issues is vital to Confor's engagement - but changes in personnel and policy priorities across the UK mean it's complex, says **David Lee**

As the trade body for the entire UK forestry and wood supply chain, Confor places great importance on communicating messages about the industry to politicians. With forestry policy devolved around the UK, this can be complicated and challenging.

Further complexity is added when working with different ruling parties: Conservatives at Westminster; SNP in Scotland; Labour in Wales; and the power-sharing administration in Northern Ireland.

Confor needs to understand these different political situations and engage appropriately. This requires a different approach in Scotland, for example, where productive planting is strong, to England, where broadleaf amenity planting dominates.

Processes for planting applications and

approvals in Scotland were overhauled by the 2016 Mackinnon Review, set up after a direct request from Confor, while there are still barriers in both England and Wales. Again, different approaches are needed.

Then elections happen, different politicians take charge of forestry policy, and the engagement process must be refreshed (and sometimes reshaped).

New ministers in Wales and Scotland

This year, Confor reacted quickly to personnel changes in Wales and Scotland. In Wales, Confor's National Manager Anthony Geddes welcomed the creation of a new Climate Change Ministry under Julie

James and Deputy Lee Waters, believing it offered a chance to look at forestry and wood in a more joined-up way.

When Mr Waters was asked to lead a 'deep dive' into why woodland creation was so difficult in Wales, Anthony was invited to join the Trees & Timber Taskforce set up to look at the issues.

In less than a month, the taskforce produced a report with 31 recommendations, including many suggested by Anthony. He is now working with the Welsh Government and taskforce members to turn those recommendations into more trees, and greater wood use.

In Scotland, Confor is also working



Lee Waters

MEDIA ENGAGEMENT A PRIORITY FOR CONFOR

Like political engagement, media coverage is part of a bigger picture – and a more complex picture in a world of 24/7 information overload.

Confor understands the importance of getting its messages out there, and doing so in as positive a way as possible. As the theme article on page 6/7 explains, there is currently a need to be more reactive, in the face of critical coverage, but proactive media remains crucial to Confor's communications strategy.

This involves working with traditional print and broadcast media, but also with online publications and engaging with social media regularly. Confor is very active on Twitter and LinkedIn and understands the media has changed. Rather than referring to 'traditional', online and social media, it's all just media as the interactions between different outlets blur.

The BBC remains very important. Chief Executive Stuart Goodall was recently on Farming Today, a significant outlet for a broader audience, talking about new planting figures. Confor is asked regularly to contribute to Farming Today, and has had excellent coverage on flagship BBC programmes like Countryfile and The One Show.

Last year, BBC Science David Shukman interviewed Confor for a detailed article on forestry, while Confor has been quick to contact the BBC where it feels its media coverage of forestry is not balanced and does not reflect expert views. A complaint



with a new minister after Fergus Ewing, a strong supporter of our industry, left his Rural Economy post.

Forestry responsibility now sits with new MSP Mairi McAllan, Minister for Environment, Biodiversity and Land Reform. Confor engaged quickly with her, stressing the vital role of forestry and wood in Scotland's climate change ambitions, while ensuring the industry's economic value remains central, especially in the green recovery from Covid-19.

Close political engagement during pandemic

One challenge of the pandemic has been arranging physical visits – undoubtedly the best way to show a politician the true potential of trees and wood. Confor has organised many visits in recent years, and aims to get ministers from all parts of the UK, including Mairi McAllan, out to sites as soon as possible.

However, online political engagement is also crucial. Confor's virtual hustings ahead of the Scottish Parliament elections won cross-party support for its manifesto, Building A Greener Future, allowing Confor to continue working closely and constructively with all parties.

Online engagement in England has focused on working with the officials at Defra who are leading UK Government efforts to increase planting through its



Mairi McAllan

THE MAIN ENGAGEMENT FOCUS FOR CONFOR REMAINS ITS MEMBERS. ALL OUR EFFORTS WITH POLITICIANS, AND OTHER STAKEHOLDERS, IS TO SUPPORT YOU, AND THE WORK YOU DO.

England Trees Action Plan. Naomi Mathiessen and Bella Murfin attended a meeting where Confor members asked questions about what the Action Plan meant for them and England Manager Caroline Ayre, and CEO Stuart Goodall, continue to work closely with all Defra officials.

Stuart continues to have regular meetings with Lord Goldsmith, the Minister responsible for forestry, who has also engaged actively with the All-Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) on Forestry and Tree Planting. Confor convenes and runs this group, which has had a busy schedule of well-attended online meetings during the pandemic – allowing engagement with more politicians and forestry interest groups and members more involved and informed.

As well as Lord Goldsmith, APPG con-

tributors have included Lord Deben, Chair of the Climate Change Committee, and Baroness Young, Woodland Trust Chair. The APPG highlights key issues in a structured way, following up meetings with letters to ministers and officials. APPG Chair, Plaid Cymru MP Ben Lake, has been an excellent supporter of the industry and we look forward to meeting Ben and others when physical meetings resume.

Confor has also worked to build closer relationships with MPs on the EFRA (Environment, Food and Rural Affairs) committee, which is conducting an inquiry into tree planting. Caroline Ayre gave evidence to the inquiry in June.

In addition, Confor is always mindful of regional issues, and has engaged closely with the Borderlands Growth Deal, taking part in virtual meetings involving both Northumberland MPs, Guy Opperman and Anne-Marie Trevelyan. Anne-Marie is a former Vice-Chair of the APPG on Forestry and now UK Government Minister for Business, Energy and Clean Growth. She is a key figure in COP26, and a person with whom Confor has a long-standing, positive relationship.

Political engagement, like everything else, is part of a bigger picture. Confor must keep in touch with all forestry stakeholders in some way, including bodies representing farming and environmental interests.

And of course, the main engagement focus for Confor remains its members. All our efforts with politicians, and other stakeholders, is to support you, and the work you do.



about a piece on Radio 4 recently led to positive changes to the way the topic was covered online.

Confor is also contacted regularly by UK-wide papers like The Times, Guardian and Sunday Times – and keeps interested journalists posted by sharing regular press releases with a wide database covering mainstream and trade media in all parts of the UK.

It can be difficult to get coverage for positive industry stories – national and regional newspapers are generally looking for a story with an 'edge' of some kind, and there is always a balance to be struck between gaining publicity and its potential impact, both positive and negative.

First-person articles allow more control over the message and Confor secured a regular monthly column earlier this year in the Press & Journal, an important publication for rural interests in North and North-East Scotland. Articles published so

far have included some written by Confor members Seafeld Estates and James Jones & Sons, describing the vital role the industry plays in the region. The most recent two, by Stuart Goodall, have been on Forestry brings benefits to farmers and the climate and Demand for wood drives the need for more trees, with a focus on relevant and straightforward messages.

Confor has also continued to supply articles to The Scotsman and is focused on securing more first-person articles in Wales and in specific regional media in England.

There have also been regular Confor articles in the Scottish Farmer, highlighting the importance of an integrated approach to rural land use (which incorporates forestry) to a wider rural audience.

In the rest of 2021 and beyond, Confor will continue to push positive industry messages into a wide range of media, while responding appropriately to negative coverage, and building constructive alliances to widen understanding of the true face of modern forestry.

Caroline Ayre, National Manager for England

A busy year for policy work

Country overview

It's certainly been a busy year to date in England. The launch of the England Trees Action Plan, the England Peat Action Plan and the new England Woodland Creation Offer, or EWOC as it's affectionately called, sitting alongside Woods into Management grant funding, the first foray into the new Environmental Land Management Scheme, and the transition out of current farming support, has certainly kept me on my toes.

And, there is more to come...

The Strategy: The England Trees Action Plan

The England Trees Action Plan sets out the Governments' long-term vision for trees, woodlands and forests and the actions Government will take to achieve these ambitions over the course of the next Parliament. There are 92 actions in the Action Plan focussed on delivering net zero by 2050, through;

- Improving woodland management;
- Boosting tree cover by both creating new woodland and by planting trees in urban areas;
- Improving the green economy; and
- Realising the social benefits of trees.

We have a lot to go at, and with a whole raft of support schemes recently launched, and/or in the wings, we must rise to the challenge and make our industry meaningful in the hearts and minds of Government and our communities.

Full details and Confor's thoughts on the Action Plan can be found on the Confor website.

The Delivery: Financial support packages and supporting evidence

Alongside the Action Plan, and the highly aspirational planting targets Government has set, a series of public support packages have been launched to help the industry deliver, with significant input from myself and Confor members throughout their development.

Over £500 million has been committed to trees within the Nature for Climate Fund and the newly launched England Woodland Creation Offer promises a substantially improved and more flexible offer for those considering woodland creation.

Two national Woods into Management (WiM) Forestry Innovation Funds have been launched to restore vulnerable woodland habitats and help woodlands adapt to a changing climate and recover from the impacts of pests and diseases:

- Routes to market for ash timber Innovation Fund; and the,
- Temporary infrastructure Innovation Fund.

A number of Regional Woodland Restoration Innovation Funds have also been launched to encourage and broaden innovation in forestry that results in improved ecological condition of existing woodlands and the role they play in climate change mitigation and adaptation.

The Tree Production Innovation Fund (TPIF) is expected in late July to encourage the development and adoption of new technologies and ways of working that will enhance the quantity, quality and diversity of planting stock available for tree planting in England.



Scottish Forestry has published details of an additional submission round in 2021 for applications to the Forestry Grant Scheme Harvesting & Processing option for forest nurseries and seed supply businesses in England and Wales to increase GB forest nursery tree supply capacity.

In addition, a Nursery Notification System is being developed to inform UK seed

THE FUTURE: WHAT DO WE EXPECT IN THE NEXT 6 MONTHS?

Looking forward, it seems that there are plenty of challenges ahead and my focus remains on current and future wood supply.

Co-design of the new Environmental Land Management Scheme (ELMS) has, and will, carry on apace. All rural support will eventually be subsumed into ELMS from 2024. The programme of Tests and Trials has been interesting in understanding landowners' objectives and expectations of the future schemes.

The **Sustainable Farming Incentive** is the first component of ELMS, and the pilot has been launched. A Farm Woodland Standard forms part of the

scheme. The scheme will expand to a full range of options and support by 2024.

Local Nature Recovery is the second component of ELMS, and the pilot will launch next year for actions that support local nature recovery and deliver local environmental priorities.

Landscape Recovery is the third component of ELMS, and the pilot will launch next year for long-term, land use change projects. Activities could include creating woodland.

A **Tree Health Pilot**, due to open for applications soon, will trial new elements of a future scheme to take

action against harmful tree pests and diseases. The pilot will offer different support to the existing Countryside Stewardship Woodland Tree Health Grants which will end in 2024. The pilot is geographically targeted and will be delivered in London, the South East, the North West and West Midlands.

A lump sum exit scheme is being consulted on to help farmers who wish to exit farming, taking a lump sum in place of any further Direct Payments. There could be real opportunities for forestry and I will be submitting a response.



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suppliers and tree growers of forthcoming woodland creation and restocking projects and allow them to prepare tree stock accordingly.

Finally, a Workforce Assessment Study, has been commissioned to review the level of skills and training needed to deliver against all of this increased activity.

The Delivery: An England Forest Industries Leadership Group

Confor is rising to the challenge it has set itself in delivering against the Action Plan and we will be convening an England Forest Industries Leadership Group. Central to the operation of the group will be a partnership between industry, government, agencies and others, dedicated to understanding the challenges and opportunities facing the sector in England and vocalising the view and ambitions of the wood supply chain in delivering economic growth and climate change mitigation in the UK.

The immediate task of the group will be a review of the England Trees Action Plan and the production of an *Industry Action Plan* that will identify and set out, amongst other things, how the industry can contribute positively to the delivery of the ETAP.

Contact caroline@confor.org.uk

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Anthony Geddes, National Manager for Wales

Positive political changes



Following the Senedd elections in May 2021, the formation of the new government has delivered a Ministry for Climate Change. This is a new style of political construct, which aligns land use policy, climate needs and decarbonisation with construction, housing, energy and sustainability policy. In short, it brings many of the co-dependant decision makers and levers required to unblock bureaucratic afforestation schemes, conservative construction methodology and stagnating land use change discussions. Today the future for forestry and processing in Wales looks bright.

Deep Dive Tree Planting Task Force

The new Senedd term has got off to a busy start with the Deputy Minister for Climate Change, Lee Waters, announcing a Deep Dive into tree planting in Wales. Confor have been at the core of this, and during its four-weeks intensive work, the task force developed 39 recommendations which were announced in the Senedd in mid July. The summary highlights are:

- A new window of the Glastir Woodland Creation Scheme, to open in September - and a new woodland creation grant scheme to be open all year round from

April 2022;

- Fast-track verification for low-risk planting applications;
- A new scheme to fund the development of new woodland plans;
- A new woodland management grant;
- More support for nurseries to increase capacity - including a commitment to work with the Confor Nurseries Group to "secure security of future tree supply";
- A working group to develop a Timber Industrial Strategy;
- Greater support for skills development.

Full details can be found on the Confor website

Industrial Strategy

As a major outcome of the Task Force work identified above, the development of an Industrial Strategy for Woodfibre and Timber in Wales is now underway. Whilst in its early stages the scope promising with key focus points covering:

- Addressing perceptions about quality of Welsh timber.
- Action to address concerns about skills and labour supply.
- Research on volume requirements to enter different markets at scale, future material need for timber in Wales.

- Priority markets for Welsh timber in all areas of construction.
- Developing stable demand and demonstrating good practice in the construction sector utilising Welsh timber.
- The changing role of NRW and diverse private sector woodlands in supplying timber.
- The role of manufacturers for added-value home grown timber and in delivering low carbon solutions.
- The role of primary processors and higher value added processing.
- Potential for a Circular Economy fund to increase the use of timber.

Confor will be representing members interests in this process and seeking to draw in their expertise during the development stages.

Natural Resources Wales - Timber Marketing Plan

In late June, NRW published the latest five-year Timber Marketing Plan. This is part of developing a wider 15-20 strategic outlook for the public estate. It aims to provide a long-term timber supply coupled to Welsh Government's objectives for Sustainable Management of Natural Resources.

>>



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>> In a period of falling timber supply from the public estate, NRW have committed to an annual harvest of between 735,000 and 835,000m³ per annum. This represents about a 10% reduction from the previous five-years committed output.

There is no doubt that in an era where Welsh Government is seeking to utilise more Welsh Timber, reducing availability will challenge those plans. Confor is seeking to work with NRW to understand what capacity there is to develop management of the public estate and greater timber and fibre resources.

Woodland Creation

Welsh Government have announced their intention to open a new window as soon as possible to allow more applications for this funding and ensure the full budget is spent. This is expected in September 2021.

They will make changes to the way NRW approve plans to speed up delivery, including a new simple desk-based exercise for low risk woodland plans and refocussing NRW resource on up-front pre-application support for landowners.

Finally, moving beyond the Rural Development Programme, a new woodland creation funding offer is being developed. This will include separate funding for creating new woodland, to develop a regular stream of new projects and enable a more agile system in allocating funding to tree planting. A pilot will be launched this year, making support available for at least 500 hectares of future woodland plans.

National Forest

The Woodland Investment Grant (TWIG) has been announced. This scheme will provide financial support for people to:

- create new woodlands, or
- make improvements to existing woodlands

The grant can be coupled with other forms of funding and will seek to create high quality, multi-purpose woodlands. The window for application will open on 14 July and run until 27 August.

Forestry Grant Scheme

Scottish Forestry has published details of an additional submission round in 2021 for applications to the Forestry Grant Scheme Harvesting & Processing option for projects in England and Wales.

Forest tree nurseries and seed supply businesses in England and Wales can apply for support to increase GB forest nursery tree supply capacity. Applications are invited for submission between 12 July and 31 August 2021.

More information can be found on the *Forestry Grant Scheme* page on the *Scottish Forestry* webpage. www.forestry.gov.scot/support-regulations/forestry-grants
Contact anthony@confor.org.uk

Jamie Farquhar, National Manager for Scotland

A year of ups and downs



What a year it's been so far. The early months saw us continuing 4-weekly supply chain meetings and the weather was adding problems to plant supply and to planting. The nurseries coped well in the Covid-constricted working conditions, but grading was not always up to their highest standards. Then, almost the whole of Scotland was covered in snow for six weeks, restricting which planting sites were accessible, and also severely restricting access to roundwood, with some forest roads still unpassable in March.

Disappointments continued with the soil sterilant **Basamid** being withdrawn, and our arguments to have **seasonal workers** in the nurseries and establishment squads being added to the SAWS (Seasonal Agricultural Workers Scheme) being rejected by the Home Office.

Yet there were some positives out of all this, with a very successful round of the **FGS Harvesting & Processing** (funded by all GB administrations) producing some great investment opportunities especially for the nurseries, and reports from FLS that their seed in tape trials at Newton were progressing well. And we held the usual **SFTT meetings** (Scottish Forest & Timber Technologies) in March by webi-

nar, attracting record audiences to hear some excellent presentations – still on the SFTT website if you missed them.

The sector drew praise from Scottish Government for achieving the creation of **10,660 hectares of new woodland** in Scotland in such a very difficult season. There had been over 12,000 hectares approved for the claim year, and so many schemes and some restocks will roll over to next season.

Following the elections in May and a cabinet reshuffle, we said goodbye to Fergus Ewing who had held the forestry portfolio since 2017 – giving the industry sector tremendous support and encouragement during his tenure – and welcomed the **new minister Mairi McAllan**, who supports both the Net Zero cabinet secretary Michael Mathieson and the rural affairs cabinet secretary Mairi Gougeon. We held a very satisfactory meeting with Ms McAllan in June, when she showed genuine enthusiasm for the sector, and we look forward to working with her.

The STTS (**Strategic Timber Transport Scheme**) assessment panel met at the end of April to consider over 100 projects which had bid for support from the £7m scheme, and 72 projects were successful.

Looking forward, it seems the old Scot- >>



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>> tish Forestry Forum is being re-born in the form of a **National Forestry Stakeholder Group**, due to meet for the first time at the end of July. There are plenty of challenges ahead, and my focus is always on current and future wood supply. That means the whole of the supply chain must work efficiently and without any undue hindrance, and of course we need to continue and increase our new woodland creation.

The **SFG Customer Reps Group** has several outstanding issues, such as the revised guidance on cultivation techniques, earned recognition (a tweak to the original Mackinnon recommendation), guidance on Value For Money especially viz deer fencing, guidance on how schemes are assessed for their economic impact, and the removal of FIDs from forestry schemes. All of this work was delayed due to Covid, but hopefully Scottish Forestry staff can now progress these matters. And they intend to introduce a new internal IT system in the autumn to handle and monitor the pre-submission process of schemes.

We are now meeting **SEPA** on a quarterly basis and will be monitoring how their sector plan is working. There are other outstanding issues here such as licensing of timber treatment plants as required by the IED (Industrial Emissions Directive).

In the world of the **forest nurseries**, we

are developing an action plan for a seed and plant supply strategy, in concert with Defra and Scottish Forestry.

We are working with FLS (Forestry & Land Scotland) through an implementation group to assist them roll out their planned **low ground pressure haulage** regime within the National Forest Estate without impacting significantly on their customers and their haulage fleet.

In **tree health** matters we have worked with SF and FLS to produce a refinement to the management regime for *Phytophthora ramorum*, with the intention of giving some flexibility to sustainable forest management within the RRZ (Risk Reduc-

tion Zone – that immediately adjacent to the east boundary of the Management Zone) while at the same time expecting urgent action in the PAZ (Priority Action Zone – i.e. the rest of the country).

The recent change in the law on the protection status of **Mountain hares** will be tested later this year when applications to control hares within enclosed woodland are submitted to NatureScot. And we are discussing the licensing of forest operations in red squirrel territory with NS with the hope that the private sector can be issued with a general licence similar to that which FLS have been granted.

Contact jamie@confor.org.uk

Approvals of new woodland

Forestry Grant Scheme approvals (hectares) As at 28 May 2021

Claim year	2020	2021	2022 +
Approved	11,866	8,950	3,059
Submitted but not yet approved	593	4,488	3,154
Potential	12,458	13,438	6,213
Pipeline		4,112	7,590
Total possible	12,458	17,550	13,803
Actually claimed	10,660		
Rollover?	1,798		

Richard Hunter, Technical Support and Industry Development Officer

A busy start to new role



It has been four (busy) months since I started with Confor. One of my first projects was to organise the Confor response to UKWAS 5 revision, a great way to meet members and get stuck in. There were some contentious issues raised in the consultation such as being able to show carbon balance and the ban of all lead shot. Carbon is never far from the headlines but it was felt that to include it as an auditable item requires further work and research before it is integrated. And as for lead shot, the shooting industry is leading on its removal for game and deer, but the ban would also impact air rifles used against Grey Squirrels (lead free air rifle pellets tend to include plastic).

Seeds

The starting point of so many of our woodlands. There has been much talk about the tree seed supply chain and to support the Nursery Producers Group I have been discussing the issue with Defra and FC. There have been calls for more seed orchards

to be located and registered to improve the quality and quantity of seed available. But also the provenance of those seeds to be spread across the country so that it is easier to obtain plants with local origins as directed in UKWAS. I would love to say that my involvement led directly to the Tree Production Innovation Fund, but it was already in the pipe line however Defra did consult with Confor during its development. Likewise we were involved with the Plant Healthy Consultation as well.

Northern Ireland

Our members in Northern Ireland are having significant issues due to the Protocol, which came into force on 1st January 2021. This includes not being allowed to import the majority of tree species due to EU plant health concerns (such as *Xylella*) and any plants with soil on them (bare root still contain enough to be banned). A temporary easing of some restrictions was granted, but this has not solved the problem. We are tackling this

issue, along with other issues such as timber transport.

Skills and education

My previous role was in forestry education and as such I have put my knowledge to good use working on the Forestry Skills Forum and the City & Guilds Employer & Industry Board, working to improve the skills and training for the next generation of foresters. Other skills areas I have got involved in include the level 2 apprenticeship review and then revision. Andy Leitch and I have been discussing a new model for skills and technical training, looking at blending private and public support together to form a UK wide training hub.

Dealing with SSE

Several of our Scottish members have been having issues with SSE in relation to getting power line shutdowns arranged to carry out felling work in the red zone. We took this up directly with SSE which then highlighted a potentially large issue >>



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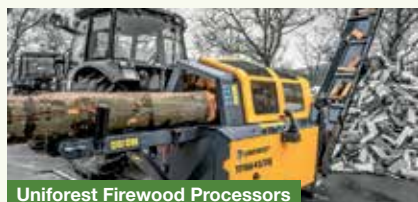
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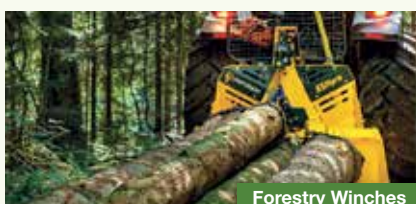
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>> of wayleaves and easements which we are still in discussion with SSE about.

Streamlining the working groups ecosystem

Confor hosts working groups on many topics. In order to provide the best value of money I have been looking at how these groups can be more streamlined so that they deliver more to the industry. The use of online teams or zoom meetings has helped as more people are able to login without the loss of travel time leading to greater participation. However we are aware of the benefits of face-to-face meetings and site visits so these may return when allowed.

Other working groups I am involved in include the Raptor and Forestry Joint Working Group with an aim to review existing knowledge, coordinate research and improve guidance around raptors in Scotland. Forestry Plastics Group looking at reducing and recycling plastics used in woodland operations, the current thrust of the group is to set up a trial with Forest Research to look at bio-degradable tree tubes. I also promote forestry in the North East England Climate Coalition, sit on the Northumberland Fire Group, and within FISA I am part of the landowners group



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and the safety skills & competency development group.

Consultations

Coming up is the UK Forestry Strategy Consultation, this is in two parts, the first is over-arching cross cutting themes, the second gets into the technical detail. I will be preparing a response to the first consultation soon based on members thoughts.

I am also exploring how we can improve support for our Northern Ireland members. The second phase of the UKWAS review and consultation opens in October, which I will lead on for Confor. However most of all I am looking forward to getting out and meeting members face to face as restrictions ease.

Contact Richard.hunter@confor.org.uk

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HAPPY PEOPLE HAPPY TREES

Characterised by a familiar atmosphere yet a flair of innovation and future, Trees Please continues to grow a sustainable and resilient business with excellent quality of both plants and service. **Richard Hunter** meets them in Northumberland.

Located on the banks on the River Tyne, Trees Please is a family run business covering more than 300 acres. Led by Charles Beaumont with Operations Director Ed Beaumont and Production Director Imam Sayyed; the business has grown from two million plants in 2013 to around 15 million this year.

The core business is conifers for the commercial timber market, however, at least a quarter of the plants grown are broadleaves. The range of broadleaves stretches from hedging and native woodland whips to larger amenity species, catering for most markets. As the desire for more broadleaves emerges from the England Trees Action Plan those figures will undoubtedly shift, as any good business moves with the market. However, Charles is cautious and does not plan to jump the gun on planting more than the industry wants, commenting that trying to predict trends can result in getting your fingers burnt. Demand for hedgerow species has increased and is expected to continue to grow especially with the launch of ELMS. Exhibiting at the recent Groundswell Show, Charles and Ed realised that the farming sector is starting to consider new ideas; and Trees Please are well situated to cover all bases.

On the range of species they grow, Charles is content that they are in a position to cover demand. He points out that

the nursery's soil type is excellent for a wide range of tree species and, combined with their ground rotation, the site is not stretched to breaking. But talking about the site, they take their responsibility towards the environment very seriously – while future-proofing their business at the same time: They are exploring the option of reducing the use of chemicals by employing robotic weeder and are researching opportunities to improve automatic graders.

Tree production is labour-intensive and the restrictions on EU workers is a massive cause for concern. To address this, Imam is in the process of recruiting two horticultural apprentices. The apprenticeship is ideal for tree growing and allows the business to invest in long-term staff. The apprentices will work at Trees Please and then attend Houghall College for their required off-job training elements. Trees Please have a history of recruiting local young people, one of their supervisors started on a Youth Training Scheme many years ago.

“THE COMPANY IS A CREDIT TO THE STAFF; THEIR TIME AND DEDICATION TO THE BUSINESS”.

(l to r): Imam Sayyed, Charles Beaumont and Ed Beaumont



The next stage of the company's growth centres around the recent recruitment of Imam who will be driving the emphasis on improved growing techniques, genetic improvement, better training of staff and use of apprentice schemes to attract new talent. They have plans to create their own seed orchard and take it a step further with seed collecting and in-house seed treatment. Imam's mantra of "Happy People, Happy Trees, Happy Customers" is mentioned several times and is very much the family feel you get when visiting the business.

The environment features heavily in our conversation. Trees Please are a Tubex supplier and promote the recycling of used tree tubes reducing the amount of plastic left in the forestry environment. But closer to home, Charles was keen to point out that the nursery has several breeding pairs of wading birds which return each year, taking advantage of the ideal ground cover for nesting.

Ed believes the reason behind the success of the business is the staff, including Imam, who only joined this year. The family feel runs throughout the company, with many of the 18 full time staff having been here for years, four from when Charles



took over in 2000. To quote Ed the company is a “credit to the staff; their time and dedication to the business”.

Ed comments that it's an exciting time for nurseries given the spotlight the sector is currently receiving via the Harvesting and Processing grant and the soon-to-be-opened Tree Production Innovation Grant, which links really well with Trees Please's future plans. The company is looking to utilise both avenues, the first for improved machinery and have started partnership work on a completely bio-degradable tree tube, to sell alongside compostable products from Tubex and Rainbow.

As with any business it's prudent to watch for the threats, such as a reduced export market which is also compounded by complicated export rules preventing easy movement of plants to the EU and to Northern Ireland. There is a constant threat from pests and diseases, many of which are imported accidentally. To counter this, Trees Please wants to maintain its focus on quality plants and service. Ed states that customer service is of the utmost importance: “The customers know what they are going to get from us, there should be no surprises”. Predictions of climate change include expected prolonged dry periods

“THE CUSTOMERS KNOW WHAT THEY ARE GOING TO GET FROM US, THERE SHOULD BE NO SURPRISES.”

which could spell disaster for a company that requires constant rainfall for the trees, but again, Charles and Ed are one step ahead having secured water extraction licenses for the Tyne so that they can water the fields if need be.

When visiting the nursery, the changes in operations due to Covid restrictions is clearly visible: wider working spaces in the warehouse, or tree rows in the fields which dropped from 5 to 4 as there was not enough space on the planter to allow three people to sit side by side. Even minor changes can have a ripple affect on the number of trees for the following year, however given the company's commitment to the customers it won't affect the service Tree Please offer.

During discussion it quickly becomes apparent that Trees Please is looking outwardly as well; with commitments to the Future Trees Trust, National Tree Improvement Strategy, part of the Hylobius Working Party and Horticultural Trades Association as well as Confor's Nursery Producers Group, which Charles was chairman for three years. Charles is part of the of the Plant Health Assurance Scheme (Plant Healthy), a new certification process to protect the country from destructive plant pests and diseases. Charles believes that cooperation and joint working with other nurseries and projects is one of the keys to success; not just of Tree Please but the wider nursery sector.

At the end of my tour of the Trees Please facilities, we stop in one of the conifer fields. The company's emphasis on quality shows as we lift a couple of plants to inspect the root development; but most importantly, I also see the real delight on everyone's faces as we walk among the plants. Which highlights Trees Please philosophy: to continue to build a sustainable and resilient business with excellent quality of both plants and service.

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FORESTRY COMMISSION LAUNCHES NEW TREE PRODUCTION INNOVATION FUND

With £1 million available this year, the Tree Production Innovation Fund (TPIF), launched on 21 July 2021 by the Forestry Commission in partnership with Defra, will encourage the development and adoption of new technologies and ways of working that will ensure the quantity, quality and diversity of planting stock available for tree planting in England.

In May 2021, the government launched the England Trees Action Plan which aims to treble tree planting rates in England by the end of this Parliament, reflecting England's contribution to meeting the UK's overall target of planting 30,000 hectares per year by the end of this Parliament.

The TPIF is looking to support projects with outputs that will better equip nurseries to increase and diversify the domestic supply of young trees to facilitate an increase in tree production while maintaining high levels of biosecurity, helping to reach planting targets.

Applicants will be invited

to apply for between £20K and £200K in grant funding to support innovative projects that address one or more of the following challenges identified through stakeholder engagement as barriers to tree nursery production.

Challenge 1

How can we make better use of available seed and vegetative planting material

to maximise the quantity, quality and diversity of trees produced?

Challenge 2

How can we develop growing systems to enhance their efficiency and resilience to change, whilst delivering improved quality and diversity of product? This challenge can include activities to promote biosecurity.

Challenge 3

How can innovative environmentally sustainable weed control solutions be used to reduce reliance on herbicides?

Applications must be submitted by 23:59 on 8 September 2021. More detail at <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/tree-production-innovation-fund>



GUIDANCE ON RESPONSIBILITIES FOR ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION IN FORESTRY

The Forestry Industry Environment Group (FIEG) was started in 2018 to advocate and facilitate consistently high standards of environmental practice and compliance across the forest management sector, and to promote the environmental benefits that result from forestry and forest management. Following the release and success of FISAs Managing Health and Safety in Forestry guidance it was felt that a similar guidance document was required to ensure that everyone involved with forestry operations knew their responsibilities for environmental protection. Hence the production of the 'Guidance on Responsibilities

for Environmental Protection in Forestry'. To ensure consistency in terminology the roles described are the same as FISAs managing H&S guidance. It is anticipated that the guidance will be seen as industry best practice and can help achieve compliance during operational auditing under UKWAS. A copy of the guidance has been included in this edition of FTN for your convenience and it is available to download from the Confor website. Environmental responsibility starts at the top and must be acted upon by all those involved in forestry operations.

The environment is never far from the news headlines



and depending on which articles you read forestry is either a bad guy or one of the solutions. And although we know the benefits of forestry, this guidance is one way of ensuring the wider

world sees that our industry is taking its role in supporting environmental protection seriously.

The FIEG is a sub group of Confor's Safety, Technical and Compliance group. It is formed from representatives working in the field of environmental protection and management across the forestry industry. The group is also looking at other areas under the environment umbrella in which they can support the industry.

Contact *If you feel there is an environmental issue that needs to be considered please speak to Richard Hunter at Confor.Richard.hunter@confor.org.uk*

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WOODSURE TAKES ON MANAGEMENT OF BIOMASS SUPPLIERS LIST

Woodsure, the quality assurance certification scheme for woodfuel, has taken over the running of the government's Biomass Suppliers List (BSL) on behalf of the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS).

Woodsure is working closely with the current contract holder, Gemserv, to make sure the experience is as seamless as possible for existing registered suppliers, with the new contract starting on 1 July 2021.

The BSL is a list of woodfuel that has proven it meets the eligibility requirements for the Renewable Heat Incentive (RHI) scheme. It allows RHI participants to demonstrate to Ofgem that the fuel they are using in their biomass boilers meets the sustainability criteria needed to claim their RHI payments.

From 1 July, contact details for suppliers will change. The new contract also brings extended helpline hours, with representatives now available from 9am to 5pm Monday to Friday.

To be authorised to join the BSL, suppliers must be able to evidence that the fuel has been produced legally and sustainably. That includes demonstrating



that the greenhouse gas emissions generated from the cultivation, processing and transport of their biomass fuel are at least 60% lower than the EU fossil fuel average for heat. Suppliers also need to confirm that the wood has been legally felled and that the woodland has been sustainably managed.

While BSL authorisation doesn't currently guarantee the quality of fuel, Woodsure does make voluntary provision via a fuel quality certification scheme which is used by many BSL suppliers. As of

April 2022, Woodsure will be introducing the fuel quality policy element and working closely with the advisory panel to deliver it.

Both Woodsure and HETAS have been working with BEIS and Gemserv as technical partners for the BSL since 2014, so they understand the scheme and are able to facilitate a smooth transition.

Helen Bentley-Fox, Director at Woodsure, added: "As we have such a focus already on sustainability and fuel quality here at Woodsure, we're very

well placed to run the scheme.

"We're looking forward to working together with suppliers, many of whom we already know. While we're not planning any immediate changes, we're hoping to work with suppliers and other partners to develop improved processes in future."

All current suppliers will be contacted with the new contact information.

Contact biomass-suppliers-list.service.gov.uk/
woodsurre.co.uk/about-woodsurre/

WELCOME TO NEW MEMBERS



Sarah Virgo

"We are pleased to welcome new members to Confor this month

from across the UK. Ahead of Confor's annual renewals in September, I want to remind all members that you can now access a members area on Confor's website at members.confor.org.uk

In this area you can view and edit your personal details, access content for Confor members, sign up to events and pay your membership subscription in September. You'll need your membership number to register, but if you have any issues, please reach out to the Membership team.

I hope you are all enjoying a great Summer so far, we are looking forward to being able

to meet some of you face-to-face again as restrictions ease."
sarah@confor.org.uk

WELCOME TO:
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FINLAND

PRODUCTION STARTS OF LIGNIN-BASED CARBON MATERIALS FOR BATTERIES

Pilot production of Lignode® by Stora Enso, wood-based carbon for batteries, is currently being ramped up. Applications include electric vehicles and consumer electronics as well as large-scale energy storage systems.

The global battery market is projected to grow tenfold over the next decade as battery producers seek more sustainable materials for the electrification of mobility. Since sustainability is becoming a top priority for the automotive industry, car manufacturers and battery producers are focusing heavily on reducing carbon emissions in electric cars.

Today, fossil-based carbon is used in the anodes of rechargeable batteries. By converting lignin separated from wood into carbon-based anode materials, the synthetic and non-renewable graphite material can be replaced.

The pilot plant for bio-based carbon materials is located at Stora Enso's Sunila production site in Finland, where lignin has been industrially produced since 2015. The biorefinery's annual lignin production capacity is 50 000 tonnes.



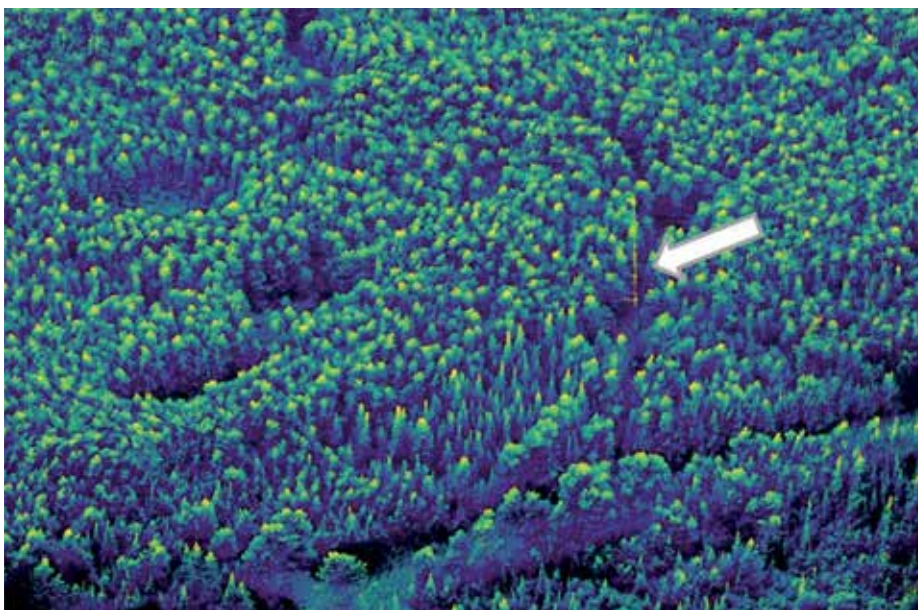
USA

UAV LiDAR TO INFORM CARBON EMISSION REDUCTION POLICY MAKING

A specialist team at the University of Wisconsin-Madison (UW-Madison) used the Routescene UAV LiDAR system to detect and visualize forests in Northern Wisconsin, USA as part of the CHEESEHEAD project. The objective of this wider project is to improve weather forecasting by understanding further how vegetation and forests influence the atmosphere. This information will be used by decision makers to develop policies which more effectively enable carbon emission reductions.

The aim of the CHEESEHEAD project (The Chequamegon Heterogeneous Ecosystem Energy-balance Study Enabled by a High density Extensive Array of Detectors) is to study interactions and feedbacks between the land surface and atmosphere and how these results can be used to improve weather and climate models. Ultimately the results will enable better carbon emission reduction policy making.

The UW-Madison team collected high density 3D point cloud data of the prominent tree species in the Chequamegon-Nicolet National Forest, USA. Routescene's LiDAR system mounted on a drone can capture the full tree structure from the tree canopy to the vegetation at ground



UAV LiDAR point cloud of area around flux tower

level. This survey was part of a wider project to understand how water, heat and carbon interact across a variety of landscapes like forests.

The Routescene LiDAR system includes

a 32-laser LiDAR sensor providing a scan rate of up to 1.4 million points per second. Point cloud density averaged 600 points per meter squared with a vertical accuracy of 2-5cm.



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CIVTECH SEED INNOVATION TO HELP TREES GROW WITH LESS WATER

A revolutionary new, wholly eco-friendly seed coating and soil treatment that boosts tree seed germination is being trialled at Forestry and Land Scotland's Newton Nursery with great success.

Growing tree seeds require substantial amounts of water so they can often struggle to germinate in conditions of soil moisture deficit. The new seed coating and soil treatment trap moisture around the seed where it is needed, preventing water from draining away and so giving the seeds a better chance of surviving.

Unlike most conventional products, the new coating manages to trap water without using micro-plastics or petroleum-derived polymers.

The process is being tested and developed by a Scottish start-up, SilviBio, a seed enhancement technology company which emerged last year from a Forestry and Land Scotland inspired CivTech Innovation Challenge – to find ways of improving the yield from tree seed. The project is led by Forestry and Land Scotland (FLS) with funding from the CAN DO Innovation Challenge Fund.

Alicja Dzieciol, CEO and founder of SilviBio, said: "We have developed two products that are aimed at increasing conifer seed germination performance – particularly during periods of water deficit – and

they can be used in the field or in nursery conditions.

"Initial tests were very encouraging and also helped us to make refinements and improvements that we are testing in a new set of trials beginning last month (May 2021).

"Both products are showing huge potential in terms of increasing seed germination rates; and also in being able to make more efficient use of water, which in years to come is likely to become an increasingly valuable resource in many parts of the world. The results will be known within months and we hope to be able to finesse both products so that we can present them to the market by 2022"

Seeds fail to germinate because of natural processes and phenomena – such as predation, weed competition or drought – and currently, around two thirds of tree seed fails or is lost.

BOTH PRODUCTS ARE SHOWING HUGE POTENTIAL IN TERMS OF INCREASING SEED GERMINATION RATES; AND ALSO IN BEING ABLE TO MAKE MORE EFFICIENT USE OF WATER

That is a substantial loss of viable material and, with the impact of the Climate Emergency likely to magnify some of these factors, it is vital to find ways of addressing these issues.

Josh Roberts, FLS Innovation Manager, said: "We are looking to adapt our forestry practices to meet the challenges that are coming our way and that means coming up with new ways of doing things.

"Lab and field trials have so far been very promising indeed. This is a great step forward for forestry and has significant implications for forestry, not just in Scotland but in countries that practice a style of forestry similar to the UK and even further afield."

"We are watching these trials very closely. As well as being vital to Scotland's effort against the climate emergency, improvements in yield would help ensure security of future timber supply for Scotland's thriving £1Bn forestry industry."

The demand for young trees in Scotland in 2019 was more than double what it was a decade ago and will double again by 2025 if the climate change action plan commitments are to be met. With most tree species only producing seed in particular years, it is imperative that as much of that seed stock as possible is put to use.

Contact forestryandland.gov.scot



NAVIGATING THE VALUE OF NATURAL CAPITAL

The sale of 1200 acres of stunning Inverness-shire land rich in natural resources and amenity provides a fascinating test of the market for natural capital, says **Jon Lambert** at Goldcrest Land and Forestry Group.

Saddle Hill offers glorious Caledonian pine with further tree planting potential, ecologically rich heather moorland, deep peat needing restoration, rewilding opportunities and beautiful amenity.

A well-designed Caledonian pine scheme planted to imitate natural forest in 1999 and 2003 is now well-established and the pines will continue to enhance the landscape and improve habitat diversity, subject to appropriate management. Home to red and black grouse, golden plover, lapwing, pipits, skylarks, birds of prey and roe and red deer, Saddle Hill offers wonderful amenity with stunning views north to the Beaulieu Firth and Ben Wyvis, three burns and a lochan.

Mr Lambert says: "Much of the current discussion in the rural land markets revolves around carbon capture, environmental, social and corporate governance (ESG) responsibilities, sustainability, carbon credits, net-zero aspirations, peatland restoration and afforestation. With this in mind, it will be interesting to see the strength of appetite for land which is both rich in natural capital assets and opportunities for improvement.

Mr Lambert adds: "We expect this to appeal to investors trying to fulfil ESG criteria. Saddle Hill ticks a lot of boxes for the environmentally focused buyer and offers fantastic scope to further enhance a stunning landscape. It is already attracting considerable interest on that basis."

However, he says, it is still challenging to convert all this into financial terms. A mature timber crop or a field supporting a flock of sheep or herd of cattle is quantifiable but natural capital is a much more



nebulous concept.

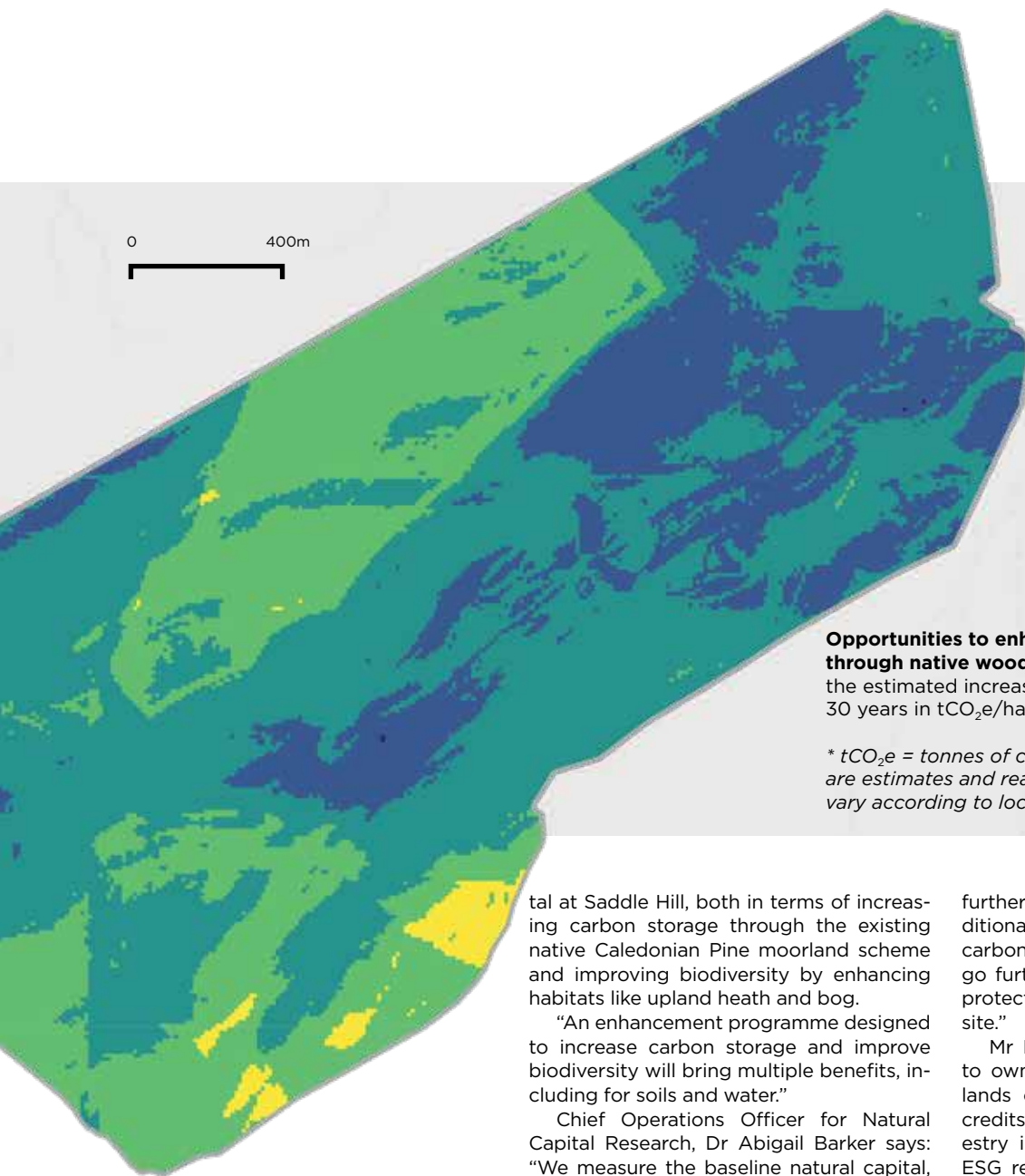
This is where land mapping specialists Natural Capital Research offered a solution. They use cutting edge modelling and high-resolution data to assess the natural capital provided by landholdings, focussing on assets such as landcover, soils, water and wetlands to assess flows of services such as carbon storage, carbon sequestration, soil erosion protection, flood risk management, biodiversity and recreation.

According to a study carried out by Natural Capital Research, Saddle Hill, seven miles east of Inverness, offers considerable potential for a land management programme designed to enhance the natural resources on site.

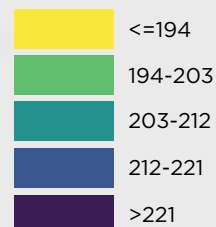
The Saddle Hill report shows the existing assets are predominantly comprised of 350 ha of native Caledonian Pine moorland scheme, 118 ha of dwarf shrub heath and 20 ha of bog. A small area of conifer plantation remains on the site.

Based on modelling using canopy height, satellite observation and other variables, the existing carbon storage at Saddle Hill is an estimated 282,900 tCO₂e or 579 tCO₂e per hectare. This lies principally in the topsoil, (279,750 tCO₂e), woodland (2,143 tCO₂e) and heath (870 tCO₂e).

The estimated carbon sequestration is 95 tCO₂e/yr, largely in the woodlands, with the highest sequestration rate taking place in the younger trees.



tCO₂e after 30 years



Opportunities to enhance carbon sequestration through native woodlands (Scots pine). Map shows the estimated increase in sequestered carbon after 30 years in tCO₂e/ha.*

* tCO₂e = tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent. Values are estimates and realised carbon sequestration may vary according to local conditions.

IT IS STILL DIFFICULT TO PUT A FINANCIAL VALUE ON SOME ELEMENTS OF NATURAL CAPITAL, SUCH AS AMENITY VALUE.

Dr Beccy Wilebore, Head of Research, says that as the existing native Caledonian Pine moorland scheme matures, combined with the potential for additional restoration of the moorland and bogs, there is considerable scope for continuing to enhance the carbon storage of the site.

The vegetation at Saddle Hill helps to prevent soil erosion (avoiding an estimated 4630 tonnes of soil loss each year) and flood risk reduction (avoiding an estimated 378,000 m³ runoff each year).

The report also shows that the site has almost no land of protected status for biodiversity (either statutory or non-statutory), offering considerable potential for enhancement.

Dr Wilebore says: "There are notable opportunities to enhance the natural capi-

tal at Saddle Hill, both in terms of increasing carbon storage through the existing native Caledonian Pine moorland scheme and improving biodiversity by enhancing habitats like upland heath and bog.

"An enhancement programme designed to increase carbon storage and improve biodiversity will bring multiple benefits, including for soils and water."

Chief Operations Officer for Natural Capital Research, Dr Abigail Barker says: "We measure the baseline natural capital, which lies in the pre-existing natural assets, from soil health and water sources to hedgerows, flora and fauna and then consider the enhancement potential existing on site, such as tree planting. This baseline is the starting point for ESG, biodiversity and net zero carbon strategies and shows the information that can be placed on an asset register.

"We then model projections of future natural capital, should various elements of the property be enhanced. The question is whether owners intend to improve the natural capital or look after it as it is. It is important to look at it in the round."

However, Dr Barker adds it is still difficult to put a financial value on some elements of natural capital. "There are things we can monetise such as flood management or carbon sequestration from tree planting but other elements are more challenging; take for example complete amenity value, it is undeniably precious and as a result invaluable in monetary terms."

Mr Lambert says: "The owners' enlightened management efforts have enhanced this precious area of land but various opportunities remain for the purchaser to continue this approach. Top of the list is

further tree planting which, providing additivity can be proved, will generate carbon credits, but more importantly, will go further to improve this landscape and protect and augment the natural capital on site."

Mr Lambert highlights the advantages to owning a beautiful piece of the Highlands over carbon credits. "As much as credits are a flourishing part of the forestry industry, allowing investors to fulfil ESG responsibilities, I think the purchase of a property like Saddle Hill opens up a whole new world of exciting potential for environmentally-focused buyers and offers a much more rewarding and tangible investment."

He remains cautious about the impact of selling off carbon credits on the future of forestry management. "The key for me where possible is keeping the trees and the carbon credits together."

Mr Lambert says: "We are custodians. As land owners and managers, we need to take responsibility for preserving the land itself, as should those addressing ESG commitments. It is not just about carbon credits; land is an infinitely precious resource. Buy the land, look after it, consider potential alternative income streams, enhance it and put that on the balance sheet."

He adds: "We are aware of a number of investors seeking climate-based land solutions and Saddle Hill offers an extremely rare opportunity. We believe it will generate significant interest."

More information Saddle Hill is for sale through Goldcrest Land & Forestry Group (www.goldcrestlfg.com) for offers over £950,000.



FORESTRY ENGLAND CONVERTS SCOTS PINE SEED STAND FOR FUTURE SEED SUPPLY

Forestry England are converting orchard-origin stands of 12,000 Scots pine in Kings Forest, Suffolk, to secure high-quality seeds to meet their tree planting targets over the coming years. The stands of 13-year-old trees cover 10 hectares and have been grown from original orchard seed identified from planting records.

The trees are being thinned and topped to produce higher numbers of cones and make it easier to collect the cones from ground level. The collected seeds will supplement those from Forestry England's nine seed orchards throughout England which contain Scots pine, Sitka spruce and Lodgepole pine trees, specially bred for their timber characteristics and strong growth features. This is the first time a conifer stand has been converted in this way for many decades as the practice fell out of use when seed orchards were planted in the 1980s.

Forestry England stores about three years' worth of seed at its seed processing facility at Alice Holt in Surrey, to ensure a secure stock of trees is available for planting across the nation's forests. The annual demand for trees is at 6.5 million and Forestry England grows 75% of the trees needed to meet this demand, with remaining trees, particularly broadleaved varieties, sourced externally. As ambitious new tree planting initiatives are announced, including the re-

THE HISTORY OF SEED STANDS IN FOREST MANAGEMENT

Seed stands began to be identified and registered during survey work of forests in the 1950s by the Scottish Forest Tree Seed Association and the Forest Tree Seed Association of England and Wales. These bodies were made up of forestry professional bodies, landowners, trade associations and the Forestry Commission and brought together the interests of the state and private sectors. In 1966 they combined into a single Forest Seed Association which continued the system begun by them of inspecting and registering seed stands, maintaining records of seed sources as well as giving advice on managing stands and methods of collecting seeds. The Forestry Commission Forest Reproductive Materials team is now the official inspectorate for public and private seed stands and orchards and provides advice on seed stand selection, registration and collection.

cent Forestry England Woodland Partnership leasehold opportunity for landowners, the organisation is focusing on ensuring a resilient seed supply for all species for the years ahead.

Nicola Rivett, Forestry England Seed Resource Manager said: "This is an important part of our plans to ensure we invest in new, secure seed resources to reduce imports, provide a greater variety of seed for species which are increasing in demand, and replace some of our ageing seed orchards. With each Scots pine cone producing 20 seeds and a sack of orchard-origin cones giving up to 500g of seed, these stands will provide future high-quality trees and timber, well adapted to changing

climate conditions for our forests.

"As well as converting the Kings Forest stands, we're identifying other orchard-origin stands of Scots pine, Sitka spruce, and Douglas fir, and looking for stands of oak, birch, and other broadleaved species with appropriate origins to manage as seed stands instead of harvesting for timber. This will ensure we have a home-grown supply of even more varieties for future forests and woodlands to flourish."

In 2019/20, a bumper season for seed harvesting, Forestry England collected three thousand sacks of Sitka spruce and Scots pine cones which contained around one thousand kilogrammes of seed – a potential 200 million trees.



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THE STRIVE FOR CLARITY: HARNESSING HUMAN NATURE TO COMMUNICATE

Cartographer **Sarah Robin Daniels** reflects on the communication power of well designed maps...

The forestry industry is still shrouded in stuffy stigmatisations. It is clear for people in the sector that the power lies in transparency. The key for a meaningful change in understanding the industry is to communicate the scope of work and educate stakeholders and the public on the facets and necessities of the job.

Developing human information exchange

A theory of our linguistic evolution as *Homo sapiens* suggests that we developed speech not only from the necessities of sharing information about our environment (eg food sources, as well as dangers), but also through the need for gossiping. We are social animals and thus it became relevant to figure out who loves you, who hates you, who in the band of your tribe is honest and who is a cheat. The amount of information one must obtain and store to keep track of the ever-changing relationships of dozens of individuals is overwhelming. Hence, a complex system of aligning a limited number of sounds to produce an infinite number of sentences, each with a distinct meaning, emerged. One could argue that 'gossiping' is a part of us. (Harari, 2011)

The Oxford English Dictionary defines 'gossip' as: "Casual or unconstrained conversation or reports about other people [subjects], typically involving details that are not confirmed as being true."

Despite our desires of knowing and being able to pass on the truth, we find ourselves tackling the onslaught of information at the tip of our fingers today. On top of battling with filtering the correct information, we live in a fast-paced society where most people simply cannot find the time to read long reports or articles.

So, we rely on whispering, biased, click-bait header campaigns that lead us astray

from seeing the big picture once again. Stories amongst people in the forestry industry world-wide have been shared of unpleasant encounters with citizens. These undesirable encounters often entail persons seeing a tree being felled and simply relying on a single piece of argument crusading the information highway that we need to save every single tree. Not realising that it's either time to harvest for timber production, the tree is sick, or even some form of clearing needs to take place to create space for native woodland and a higher biodiversity etc.

How do we confront our habits of trusting unreliable or only segments of information and become experts in communication whilst accommodating today's everyday challenges?

There is truth in data

When the opportunity to facilitate understanding is the objective, a vital part of the communication is to find a medium which can produce interest in the subject, build trust with the audience, and capture the attention of the user.

This is where data visualisation comes to life. Where there is data, there is truth. Let's be candid about this, when visualising data, the goal is to achieve trust yet there is no visualisation which is purely objective. Design is selective and guides the

GREAT DESIGN HAS
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HONEST. IT DOESN'T
MANIPULATE THE READER
OR PRESENT ITS OBJECT
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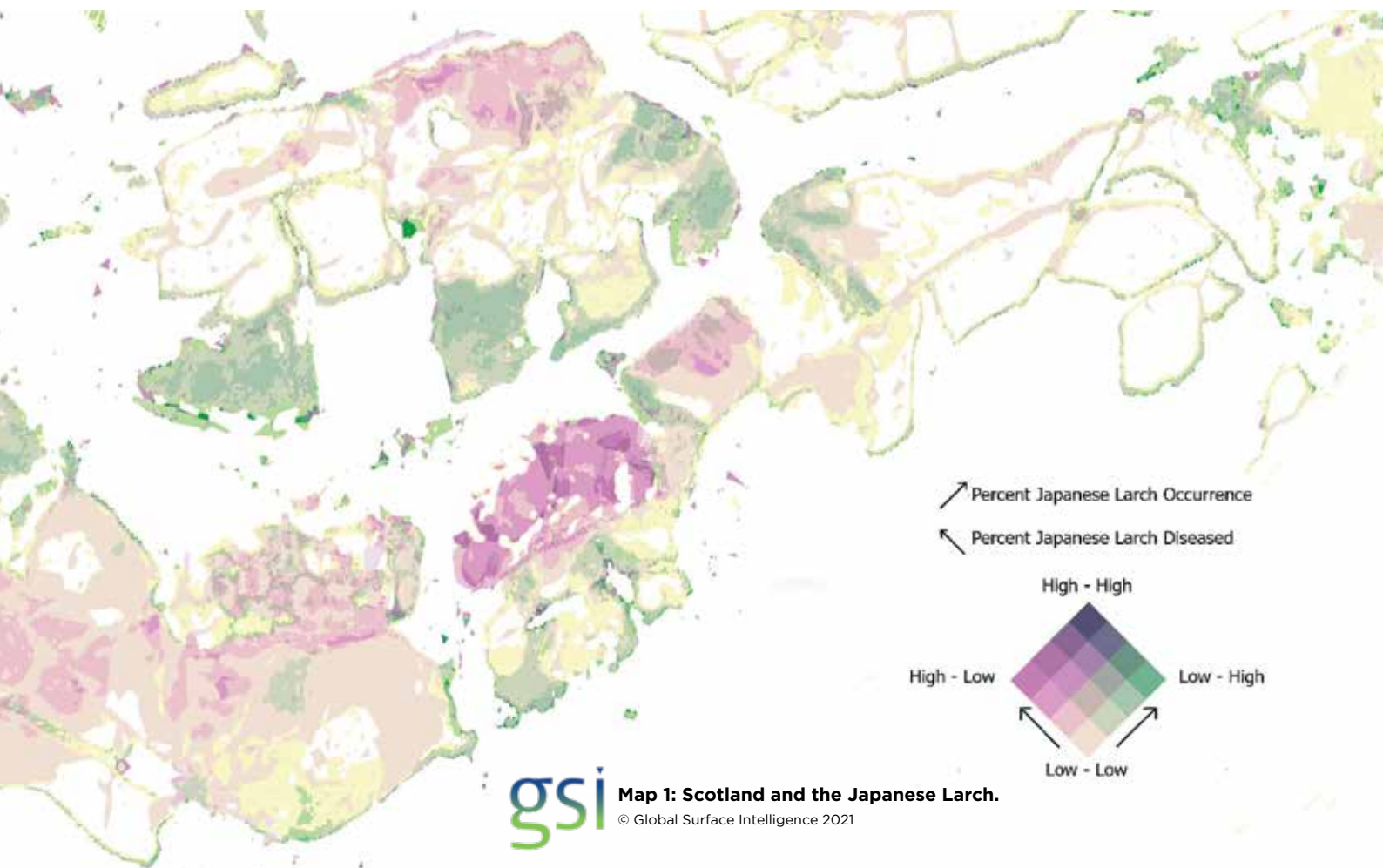
user's eye to the pivotal information. So, it is in everyone's interest more than ever to adhere to the unspoken obligation of presenting the truth.

Great design has quality when it is honest. It doesn't manipulate the reader or present its object as more powerful or innovative than it really is. Avoid confusing your audience through misleading or even dumbing down information. It is much more advantageous to endeavour clarity and transparency rather than presenting too much information as well as too much simplicity. Clarity is the principal we must strive for in all walks of life. (Kirk, 2019)

The covert companionship of design and dopamine

Just like chasing gossip, chasing beauty is inherent in our species. As humans we are primarily visual beings. Throughout our history we have come to learn what we find beautiful and what we don't. Sure, there is no consensus on every piece of art or architecture as there is still a subjective component. Nonetheless, from a neurobiological point of view, the basics of understanding aesthetics has been impregnated in us. Nature awarded us with the ability of having our reward system in our brain fired up when we see something beautiful. (Shokurova, 2020)





This gives us the ingenuity to harness the power of beautiful data visualisation design to capture our audience's attention better and longer due to the ability of triggering the release of dopamine in the reader's brain. We are suddenly communicating with the public on a level of

clarity, truth, and nature's chemical reward system.

Map 1: The Japanese Larch bivariate map portrays two variables, representing two different phenomena: Larch occurrence and diseased Larch into one symbolization. The purpose of such a visualisation is to unearth the spatial correlation between two variables which might not be apparent when viewed on two separate maps. These types of maps are inherently more complex and require more effort from the map reader, which may seem like a step back from the concept of clarity, though if the map is thoughtfully designed with an insightful legend, it can offer greater opportunity for effective communication, lending new perspectives for informed decision making on a landscape scale.

Prioritising information to create visually engaging maps

A map such as *Map 2: Scotland's Woodlands* is as straightforward as they come. By choosing a dark theme, the designer guides the map reader's eye to the main focal point: The canopy coverage across Scotland. It gives a perfect generalized overview of treeless landscapes as well as woodland areas. Though, it won't be able to tell the reader where it is or isn't possible to create more woodland, as there sim-

ply isn't a single map which can comprise every single piece of information it takes to illustrate the complexities of ecosystems, soil, climate, peatland, and more to determine suitability for planting. Instead, it invites for a discourse and a curiosity to find actionable solutions to increase woodland areas and mitigate climate change.

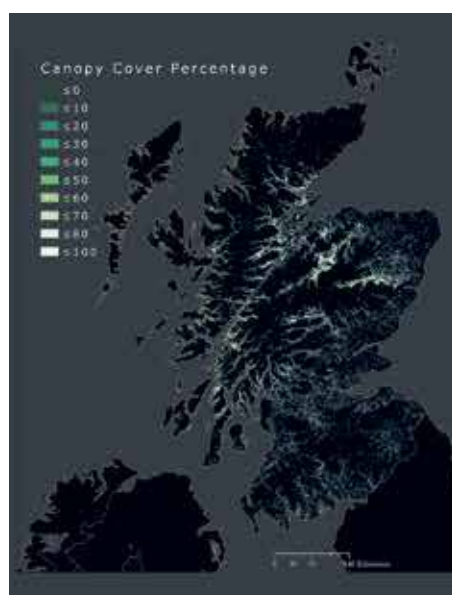
When harnessing the power of design-driven data visualisation, first and foremost you must make a choice: Who is your map reader and what is the map's purpose? Do you want to show that your business is sustainable? Then focus on that.

Data visualisation is primarily about clarity, but it is also about your map reader. It should entice debate, bring the right set of information to the intended audience, and give new perspectives for actionable intelligence.

More information Maps by Sarah Robin Daniels using GSI (with permission) and NWSS data.

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Map 2: Scotland's Woodlands

WELL-BEING IN FORESTS

Jean Nairn, certified forest therapy guide at Woodlands Breathing, explains the concept of forest bathing and the opportunity it might present for landowners looking to diversify.

Despite the challenges of recent months, new opportunities have arisen. Living through the pandemic has encouraged many people to explore their local surroundings and to be curious about the natural environment around them. For some, as a way to protect and improve their mental health, and to slow down, they have sought refuge in local woods and parks. This may have re-kindled a renewed connection with nature from childhood, or perhaps they have been introduced for the first time.

The past year has brought changes in our lives and work, and for some, particularly key workers, life has become very stressful, caring for others or participating in a constant stream of video calls. Perhaps this scenario might give opportunities to woodland owners and managers to diversify into the natural capital of forests and trees through social and health benefits?

What is 'forest bathing'?

Forest bathing or therapy, as practiced by the Association of Nature & Forest Therapy (ANFT), is inspired by the Japanese practice of *shinrin yoku* which was the term coined by the Japanese Forestry Agency in 1982. Forest bathing is a practice of nature immersion to boost well-being and support health. At that time, there was a public health crisis in Japan with an increasingly urbanised population suffering from stress, pollution and ill health. In response and following research into solutions, *shinrin yoku*

was developed and now there are many designated trails across the country. In Japan, some health measurements are recorded before and after a session to check for physiological changes such as blood pressure or cortisol levels. Research demonstrates evidence of the benefits of phytoncides, the natural aerosols of trees in boosting well-being and immunity. These organic compounds are used by trees to protect themselves from attack, for example by bacteria or fungus. As humans have spent most of our existence outdoors and in nature, the healing properties of phytoncides are known to be beneficial. In the UK, Professor Miles Richardson, at University of Derby, is studying the effects of forest bathing and mental health.

The ANFT way uses a 'standard sequence' of 'invitations' to guide participants on a gentle walk. The guide works in partnership with the forest (as the therapist) so each session will be unique though some elements will be similar. Part of the ANFT ethos is reciprocity with the land, and this can be done in many ways; it could be encouraging people to change their perception of nature if they respect and appreciate it more. The hope is that people will be more keen to protect nature and trees, or it could be changing elements of our lives such as shopping habits or litter picking in our local area or planting trees.

A full forest therapy session usually lasts around three hours but attendees are not expected to travel a great distance during the session but are encouraged to slow down, connect with their senses and be present. Sometimes, with being used to our busy lives and always being connected to technology, the challenge is to slow down, to put notifications and 'pings' to the side and decelerate for a while, even for forestry professionals!

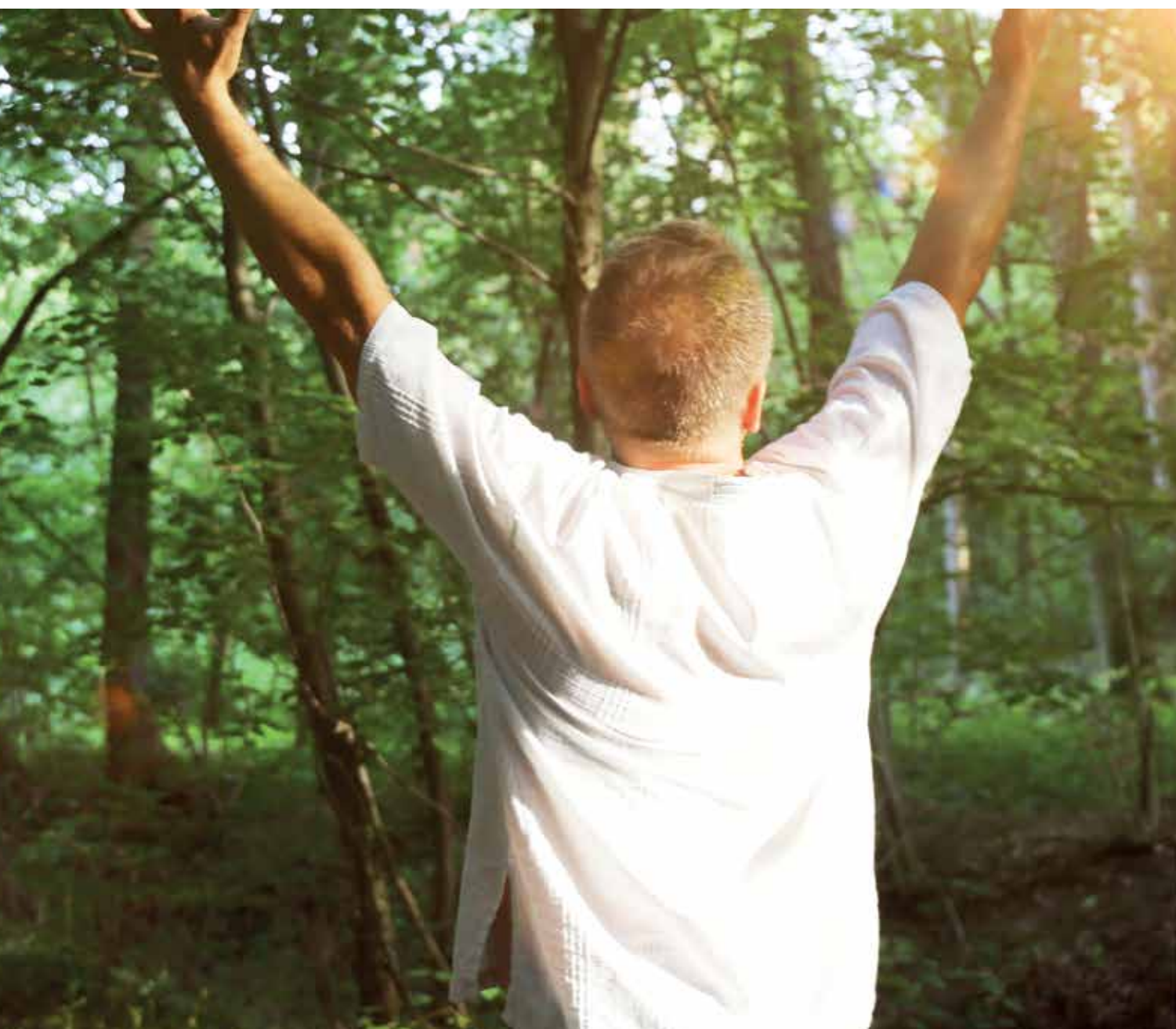
How landowners can get involved

After many years in the forest industry including a few working with Confor, I have found a new path in the woods. I am now



a Forest Therapy Guide, certified by the Association of Nature and Forest Therapy (ANFT) which has a global network of over 850 guides in 55 countries. Currently, there are some ANFT guides practicing in the UK, with a select few based in Scotland. We have undergone a six-month training and mentoring period so that we can welcome and support participants on our walks.

Some Confor members may like to offer a corporate well-being sessions of forest therapy to employees or other guests, as a bespoke group. As an example, a team of colleagues who had not seen each other in person for 18 months were recently brought together for an introduction to forest bathing - the forest received the group with a sunny afternoon of calm and dappled light. A session can be 'in-per-



son' or since lockdown, 'remote', as long as everyone has sufficient phone reception and headphones. In this case, everyone walks where they are across the world (or they participate from home if unable to get outside), usually over a shorter duration.

Land managers may wish to consider offering forest bathing sessions as part of their activity programme as a wellness practice. Woodlands Breathing can facilitate these walks in partnership with the landowner. Alternatively, a designated trail could be established for guided walks, or people to self-guide a route, and I can assist with assessing what would make a suitable trail for such walks.

In addition, I am currently seeking suitable trails for use, for group and remotely guided walks mostly around central Scot-

A FULL FOREST THERAPY SESSION USUALLY LASTS AROUND THREE HOURS BUT ATTENDEES ARE NOT EXPECTED TO TRAVEL A GREAT DISTANCE DURING THE SESSION BUT ARE ENCOURAGED TO SLOW DOWN, CONNECT WITH THEIR SENSES AND BE PRESENT.

land, though other locations can be considered for occasional walks, or other guides in members' localities can be suggested.

As 'social' or 'green' prescribing becomes more popular across the UK, with the benefits of time spent outdoors in nature evidenced by research, forest therapy can support greater connections and relationships with trees. In turn, this should enable more people to understand why it is important for the planet, to look after our forests and plant more trees, or why using timber as a substitute for construction materials is worthwhile.

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Public access to woodland

Kate Donachie from Brodies LLP's insurance and risk team answers common questions about who can use your land – and what they can do there. A highly relevant topic this summer!

CAN ANYONE COME ONTO MY LAND?

In Scotland yes; the Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2003, which came into force in 2005, gives everyone rights of access over land and inland water throughout Scotland - commonly known as the 'right to roam'. There are restrictions on what can be done on the land and what parts can be accessed but it is more permissive than the system in England and Wales, where the right to roam only extends to open access land or access land, such as mountains, moors heaths and downs. Importantly, in England and Wales, the public has no right to enter and use woodland.

WHAT CAN THEY DO ON MY LAND?

People cannot do anything that is an offence - including theft, poaching, dropping litter, and disturbing certain wildlife. People also have no right to hunt, shoot, fish or undertake any form of motorised recreation. Dogs must be kept under control and nothing should be taken from the land for commercial purposes.

Access must be exercised responsibly, which means respecting peoples' privacy, peace of mind, helping land managers and others to work safely and effectively and caring for the environment.

Camping is allowed, so long as visitors don't interfere with the landscape and leave nothing behind. They can also climb trees provided no damage is done, and build dens, but only using dead branches and nails cannot be driven into the wood. If there is water, unmotorised water sports are allowed.

These activities wouldn't be permitted if they interfered with the public taking access, or your own reasonable management of the land.

CAN THEY ACCESS ANY PART OF MY LAND?

No, there are exclusions. Those include areas where crops have been sown; that is plants cultivated for agricultural or commercial purposes, including saplings. However, access around the edges of those fields is allowed and orchards, woodland and land used for growing trees are not excluded.

Private houses and the surrounding land are excluded. The extent of that land is not defined but should be sufficient to afford privacy.

Farm and industrial buildings, and the



surrounding land are also excluded but again there's no guidance as to the extent of the surrounding land. It's likely to apply only to land that is required to operate the buildings effectively, taking into account the need to move livestock to and from a field. What is clear, however, is that an entire woodland cannot be excluded from the rights of access.

FOR EXCLUDED AREAS, HOW DO I PREVENT ACCESS?

Erect signs, gates and fences. To avoid disputes about these measures, you can seek a declarator from the court, in terms of section 28 of the 2003 Act, which would prevent anyone taking legal action against you.

WHAT IF MY LAND WAS FENCED AND GATED PRIOR TO 'RIGHT TO ROAM' COMING INTO FORCE?

This doesn't allow you to restrict access. Where there's a right to be on land, you should unlock gates and remove any signs that prevent or deter access.

WHAT IF SOMETHING I DO ON MY LAND PREVENTS OR INHIBITS ACCESS?

Land managers must manage their land and water responsibly. Any actions that prevent or inhibit access are judged objectively in accordance with what a 'reasonable person' would consider reasonable

or proportionate. Actions that don't meet that benchmark will not be allowed.

AM I LIABLE IF SOMEONE IS INJURED ON MY LAND?

Land occupiers must show reasonable care to those on their land, so they don't suffer injury as a result of anything done on the land, or any hazards present there. However, the occupier is unlikely to be liable if the injury occurs to an adult because of a longstanding or obvious hazard. Where a hazard is unexpected, unusual or not obvious, steps should be taken to alert people of its presence. Tree felling, for example, could be an activity to which the public should be alerted. The duty is not to ensure safety but rather to allow responsible adults to exercise caution. Accordingly, clear signage at entrance points and within the vicinity of the works is likely to fulfil that duty. However, where unaccompanied children are likely to be on the land, more care must be taken and protective measures such as fencing may be necessary.

The standard of care owed by occupiers in Scotland is similar to that owed in England and Wales. However, in Scotland there's no distinction between people on land by invitation and those who are uninvited, whereas in England and Wales the duty owed to trespassers is less onerous.

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Forest market continues to move forward

Simon Hart (FICFor, FRICS) and Olly Thompson (BSc For, MICFor) of John Clegg & Co report on latest sales and trends in the forest market across Great Britain.

Recent sales in Wales

Wales is showing continued strength with sizeable properties coming to the market. At over 215 stocked hectares at the time of sale (over 300 hectares gross), Mynogau in Powys completed in April this year. Typical in composition of a commercial Welsh forest planted in the 1960s, Mynogau is now going through the restructuring phase with improved Sitka spruce and, to a lesser extent, Douglas fir being the obvious species of choice for the second rotation. The forest has played host to the Redbull downhill MTB event for several years. At an average of 13 years, Mynogau sold for in excess of £16,000/ stocked hectare, which sits in with the general upward trend of prices from the past 6-12 months.

A notable set of four mixed conifer properties completed in later Q1 of 2021, Bronnant, Waun Maenllwyd, South Dairy

and Craig Arthbry. They were part of a larger portfolio sale and with the exception of Craig Arthbry all properties were freehold. With an average age of less than 20 years, the three freehold properties sold for over £29,000 per stocked hectare.

Cefn Llwyd, a very interesting and complex set of forests in north Wales, was brought to the market in early 2021. It consisted of six lots split over 1200 hectares. The larger lots dominated by large areas of mature Sitka spruce and Douglas fir dating back to the 1950s and 1960s. Some areas had previously been managed under various CCF systems, but sporadic windthrow has led to a greater use of clear fells and restocking with benefits of using improved planting stock. The guide price of £15m (average prices of approx. £16,000/total ha, but this did include some 200ha of moorland) was well exceeded.

Smaller properties in England

Values continue to rise in the world of smaller properties, especially mixed broadleaved. Predominantly centred on west and south England these broadleaved woodlands can vary in their value per hectare with location being the main factor. Properties are often strongly contested through either an early offer in excess of guide price being accepted, or the rapid setting of a closing date. At only 9.3 hectares and sitting on the side of a hill near The Forest of Dean, Little Perlieu had an offer accepted with 10 days of being launched and will complete in excess of the £115,000 guide price (£12,000/ha). At the higher end of the market, Graffham Down and Queen Elizabeth Forest is located on the South Downs in West Sussex. At over 100 hectares of mixed broadleaved woodland, this property is complex and diverse. >>



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>> With difficult access and limited potential timber production, this property has huge potential for sporting and conservation opportunities. The £2m price tag with surely be exceeded. Almost certainly, the lack of hectares coming to the amenity market is driving prices upwards. Timber/firewood are only a minor consideration if any in many situations. Also after the past 18 difficult months, there appears to be a surge in demand for woodland/green space with first time purchasers wanting a lifestyle choice or some wanting to either draw money from their pensions to own land/woodland or to purchase through their SIPP.

Productive forests in Scotland

Scottish forestry plantation and land prices continue to drive forward and upward. With unsatisfied demand, the situation seems unlikely to change anytime soon. Demand is strong across the board, with a range of buyers dominated by private individuals and the investment funds.

A notable feature of the market in the first six months of the year sees three large upland spruce-dominated woods being offered for sale. All are located in south Scotland with generally good access to a wide range of timber markets. It is worth looking at these in more detail.

First to the market was Ramsaygrain, within a large forestry complex to the south west of Hawick. This is a great example of a well-managed second rotation woodland, originally afforested in the 1960's/70's and replanted over the last 20 years it has an average age of 13. Yield class is exceptional and averages higher than YC24 across the more than 600ha of stocked area. The property came to the market in three lots and a total guide of £14 million, equivalent to more than £28,000/stocked ha. It is now under offer and speculation is that a price of some £33,000/ha or more has been achieved.

The second property located between Lockerbie and Eskdalemuir, guided at £15 million and offered in a single lot. There is some potential wind farm development, but the backbone of the investment is average aged 17-year-old spruce of good Yield class. The property has a great location for markets, but does lie quite a way into a forest complex with more than 10 miles of in-forest driving to get to the more remote sections. A guide price of some £38,000/stocked ha was set with offers invited just after the time of writing. The investment funds are again expected to lead the market.

The third property is Priestthaugh, a mixture of first and second rotation woods, located just to the south of Hawick, it has an average age of 28 and is of good Yield class. Again this property is in a single lot with a guided of £18 million (about



Craig Arthry (top); South Dairy (above) and Little Perlieu Wood (inset)

THESE ARE BUOYANT TIMES FOR THE FORESTRY PROPERTY MARKET IN THE UK AND THERE IS NO EVIDENCE THIS IS ABOUT TO CHANGE.

£33,000/stocked hectare) highlighting the confidence that the market can absorb three large commercial forestry transactions, demonstrating the buying power of some of the investment funds.

These values are much higher than has typically been seen over recent years and a good demonstration of the rising market is Balnabeeran, a 92ha spruce wood, located near Inverness and mainly planted in 1987. This property came to the market in late 2018 with a guide of £785K and sold for just over £1 million in 2019. It has just been

remarketed with a guide of £2 million or some £24,000/stocked hectare. It will be interesting to see what it goes for.

These very high values for woodlands logically justify high land prices and that is what we are seeing in Scotland. Hill land suitable for afforestation, and crucially with a realistic chance of securing approval, is now regularly changing hands at £10,000/ha and more. This market is remarkably opaque with many sales happening off market. Some farmers seem reluctant to openly market their land for forestry; but with strong demand, the most likely way to achieve top price is with an open market sale.

These are buoyant times for the forestry property market in the UK and there is no evidence this is about to change.

Contact

simon.hart@johnnclegg.co.uk

oliver.thompson@johnnclegg.co.uk



Further market volatility

Global Outlook

After the roller coaster ride of the last year the market appeared to be settling over the last three months as supply finally started to increase and show signs of coming into balance with demand.

US softwood prices had begun a steady decline back towards the levels seen in late 2020 which although some way off the peak seen in March 2021 were significantly up on the long term-average.

July 2021 has seen a sudden halt to the falling prices as wild fires in British Columbia and the Pacific North West started to disrupt harvesting operations.

This situation came to a head on the 22nd and 23rd July when Canfor announced that due to wildfire disruption to harvesting operations and very significantly disruption to rail haulage it was going to temporarily reduce its processing operations.

The price of lumber jumped by 10% in a day (\$£60 per 000bdf) triggering a market closure. It is anticipated that other companies will have to follow suit which has resulted in prices rising again as strong market demand starts to fall out of balance with supply.

This is a difficult situation for the West Coast sawmills as they now face falling prices, high stock levels, a sudden crash in the DIY market as people go back to work after Covid and now cannot ship their product due to rail disruption. Any stabilisation of prices will be welcome.

Elsewhere in the world, we are past the seasonal spike in demand but are now seeing increased supply disruption due to natural events such as wildfires and floods at the same time as most plants in Western Europe are taking a well earned maintenance shut down or summer holiday

after a year the likes of which has never been experienced before.

This has created concerns over volumes currently in the supply chain and future supplies at a time when global demand continues to be strong.

There are strong indicators that global demand for timber will continue to increase especially in the USA, Asia and China at the same time as climate change factors put increasing pressure on supplies.

Few countries can now increase their timber exports significantly and there are increasing signs that Western Europe including Scandinavia will become a key player in the global market.

UK softwood market

Tight global supply of sawn timber and the increasing demand from around the globe of European sawn timber and wood products has had a knock on effect in the UK and has created a very strong market in 2021.

Sawlog demand remains very strong, the small round wood market has been much more subdued as small round wood supply improves and processors absorb record levels of sawmill co-product. There is a distinct North V South divide.

THERE ARE STRONG INDICATORS THAT GLOBAL DEMAND FOR TIMBER WILL CONTINUE TO INCREASE ESPECIALLY IN THE USA, ASIA AND CHINA

The situation in the North

The North has seen a much better supply picture as strong prices have brought large volumes to the market, crucially in large felling coupes which allow high machine productivity. The machine resource is now fully utilised, lots of jobs have started and this now putting pressure on the haulage resource, stocks are building at roadside and consequently prices have stabilised.

The holiday season is kicking in for the processors so there is now a slight slowdown in uplift, most log yards are now full up after an unprecedented year it is worth remembering that in most cases the supply chain has been working flat out for a year with constraints that none of us could ever imagine. It has been a truly monumental effort and a break is well deserved.

Recent weeks have seen a fresh round of standing sales offered to the market on the back of high prices although it is interesting to note that a lot of these are more difficult sites with constraints on access, steep ground, mixed conifer, poor stem form and difficult to work sites. As these sites come on stream they will naturally slow down production and change the assortments away from primarily sawlogs to a more varied product range.

The Irish felling licence situation is slowly improving and the Irish mills are gradually reducing their dependence on timber from the West coast and islands of Scotland.

The situation in the South

In the South (Wales and England) the supply to the market has been much more constrained and has really only just started to improve. High prices have brought significant new volumes to the market from

£ per tonne delivered to customers in Wales, central and south England (July 2021)

Product	Lower price	Upper price	Trend
Log 18	£105.00	£115.00	=
Bar 14	£80.00	£90.00	=↑
SRW	£50.00	£55.00	=↓
Fencing	£68.00	£74.00	=↑
H Wood firewood	£55.00	£60.00	=↓

£ per tonne delivered to customers in north England and Scotland (July 2021)

Product	Lower price	Upper price	Trend
Log 16	£95.00	£105.00	=
Bar / pallet 14	£70.00	£80.00	=
SRW	£45.00	£50.00	=↓
Fencing	£60.00	£65.00	=↑
H Wood firewood	£60.00	£70.00	=↑

These prices are for guidance purposes only and are based on historic market information



Spruce logs aboard a cargo ship

Natural Resource Wales, Gresham House and the forest management companies and whereas offering early in the year were on the whole of poor quality there is substantially more sawlog available now.

Most mills have extended their supply network and put the infrastructure in place to bring additional volume from further afield and this is now coming on stream which is helping to ease the supply situation.

Holiday time for the mills over the next month gives a chance to carry out much needed maintenance, give staff a rest and build some stock in the yard.

One significant constraint currently is haulage; there is now a well publicised shortage of drivers as well as a 'PINGdemic' at the same time as the holiday season is finally kicking in.

To summarise, for the softwood sector the market, although back from the peaks of spring 2021, is still excellent, wood supply is currently adequate, stocks may build during the summer holiday season but the outlook for the next six months looks good and demand should increase again as the year goes on. Weather, sporting constraints and daylight hours will all combine to slow production down; this together with the increasing seasonality of the timber market should present a good

Roadside hardwood sawlog prices July 2021

	Oak plankling	Oak beam	Oak fencing	Export ash	White ash sawlogs	Export beech	Large Douglas fir and Larch
High price	£12.00	£10.00	£7.00	£3.00	£4.00	£3.00	£5.25
Mid price	£10.00	£8.00	£6.00	£2.75	£3.50	£2.75	£4.50
Low price	£8.00	£6.00	£5.00	£2.00	£3.25	£2.50	£3.00

These prices are for guidance purposes only and are based on historic market information

opportunity to prepare parcels for marketing in the autumn and working over winter.

UK Hardwood Market

The focusing of resources on diseased ash has had a knock on effect on the wider hardwood trade at a time when demand has quietly been improving for home-grown species.

Supply of good beech to the market has also been limited at a time when demand has improved and prices have quietly crept up to compare with export ash.

Oak prices have improved and there are now very good prices available for good quality, large diameter logs which is a stark contrast to this time last year. In some areas there is now a shortage of good quality oak and it is an excellent time to offer good oak parcels to the market. The principle market for oak remains the export market and despite the recent

turmoil in shipping rates, demand remains good and the trade has proved to be very resilient.

Sweet chestnut appears to be fashionable at the moment and demand has again improved and there is now a domestic market for good quality, shake free material, it does not have to be large but should be straight, knot free and sound.

Firewood demand remains good in the north of the country and prices have remained stable but in the south there is still a glut of diseased ash which is holding prices down to around chip wood levels.

In summary the hardwood market has quietly and steadily improved for "quality" material, especially oak, there is not a huge volume market and markets quickly become full. There is however increasing interest in sustainable timber of domestic origin. As we approach the winter hardwood felling season the outlook is much brighter than last autumn.



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



Mini/Midi Forwarders

Coming from a contracting area which was overflowing with Valmet/Komatsu 860s and Timberjack/John Deere 1710s anything smaller was often deemed a toy. Indeed, up here, the ambiguous 820 and 810 which were synonymous with the thinning squads were often referred to as the “puddle hopper” due to their relatively small size and light weight.

The introduction of the first of the low impact forwarders was greeted with much suspicion and derision, certainly locally, and I would include myself in that group. However, age and an open mind tell me that there is absolutely a place for them in the UK forest industry. Not only have these machines stood the test of time but they have been further developed and indeed other manufacturers have come to the fore. Even loaded, many of them will still be lighter than the aforementioned 820/810 unladen! They will never compete with a conventional forwarder in terms of output, but then that is not the intention. Imagine a busy bee, back and fore to the

hive, and that is what you have with a low impact forwarder.

Small roundwood prices continue to increase and landowners are cashing in on small blocks with poor timber quality. Typically, shelterbelts etc which may have poor access and are being felled motor manually, or the removal of non-native conifers from environmentally sensitive areas. Using a conventional forwarder may well be uneconomical, especially when low loader shifts are factored in, given the volume of timber; it may also be environmentally damaging; and put simply, it may not be the best machine for the job. Not only will a low impact forwarder have minimal impact on the site, but they can be relatively easy to transport to site, indeed even for a day's work, with some able to be moved using a pick-up and trailer. Horses for courses, as they say.

The following are examples of the types of products that are currently available on the UK market. This does not include ATV equipment, but self-powered equipment only.

ALSTOR

One of the better known brands in the low impact forwarder market, the Alstor range comprises of four models the 810; the 821; the 833 and the 840 Pro. Both cabbed and open station models are available. All four models are 8-wheeled with all wheels being driven. Load capacity ranges from 2000kgs on the 810, 2500kgs on the 821/833 and 3000kgs on the 840 pro.

The 840 pro features a hydrostatic transmission, similar to those found in other 'full size' forwarders, whereas the smaller models all feature a variator transmission comprising of three forward gears and one reverse. Crane reach on the three smaller models is 3.5m with a lift capacity of 350kg at full reach. Other crane options are available too. The 840 pro is equipped with a 4.98m extension crane with 300kg lift capacity at maximum reach. Stability on all models is provided by stabiliser legs which should be lowered when operating the crane.

Various options are available for the Alstor range including engines - petrol >>



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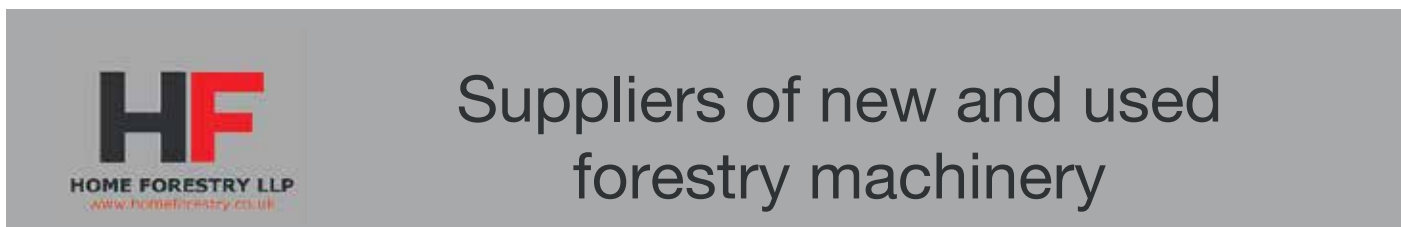
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>> and diesel variants exist; different controls such as electric joysticks; band tracks and wheel chains; clam shell bucket and even a tipping body – perhaps opening up different work opportunities such as foot path maintenance and construction to owners.

However, perhaps one of the most important features of the Alstor range of machines is the transport required for them. Given their low weight (1490-2300kg depending on the model) these machines can be transported on a trailer behind a suitable towing vehicle. This means that (i) small/low volume sites are more viable; (ii) sites where security issues exist are also now workable – take the machine off site at the end of the day; and (iii) sites where changeable environmental constraints exist can be worked in a much more flexible way.

JARCRAC

Something a little bit different and a relative newcomer to the UK market is the Jarcrac range of low impact machines. Specifically, the Jarcrac Dual; the Evopro and the Magnapro. Basically, these are all same machine underneath. The Dual can, as the name suggests, be set up as har-



vester or forwarder with uprated hydraulic pumps and controls being the main difference. However, it is the Evopro and Magnapro which we are primarily interested in.

The Evopro is a fully tracked machine,

featuring tracks which are 52cm wide and constructed from rubber with steel inserts. Ideally suited to sites with low load bearing capacity or where damage to the forest floor has to be kept to the minimum. >>



VIMEK

The Vimek concept is to produce small-scale forestry machines, both harvesters and forwarders, suitable for first thinnings.

Within the range, there are two forwarders – the 606TTW and the 610SE. Both machines are 6-wheeled and are full-cabin models. The 606TTW comes with a 3000kg load capacity; Kubota diesel engine rated at approximately

24HP and weighs in at 2960Kg. The 610SE features a 5000kg load capacity and an unladen weight of 4910kg. The 610SE is powered by a 67HP Cat diesel engine. Both machines have ground clearance of 40cm. The 610SE is also available as a 'BioCombi' which also includes a grapple felling head.

Both the 606TTW and the 610SE feature frame locks/oscillation locks similar to those found on conventional forward-

ers so one less thing to worry about when using these machines to their full potential. Amongst the range of options available such as a diesel refuelling pump; LED lights; rear camera etc is a unique option of a tiltable grapple. The concept being that the grapple and logs can be stood vertically to allow them to be extracted out of a standing crop and lessening the chance of damaging the remaining trees.

MACHINERY

>> The Magnapro is the 8-wheeled version of the machine, with wheel and tyre options of 400 or 500/60 -15.50. Conventional band tracks and wheel chains can be fitted to these wheels if necessary. Ground clearance is 58cm.

These machines are fitted with a Perkins engine rated at approximately 73HP and weigh in at around 5700kg (dependant on specification) with a load capacity of 5000kg. Crane options are either a reach of 5.7m or 6.7m depending on model and crane manufacturer, and a fully automatic frame lock is fitted. As usual, a variety of options is available.

As with the Vimek range of machinery, the Jarcrac machines are transportable using tractor drawn low loaders or smaller lorries e.g. 6 wheelers with a beavertail configuration, keeping movement costs down and permitting access to sites with poorer accessibility.

More details *Scottish customers purchasing low impact machinery may also benefit from the Harvesting and Processing Grant - please see www.ruralpayments.org/topics/all-schemes/forestry-grant-scheme/harvesting-and-processing/*

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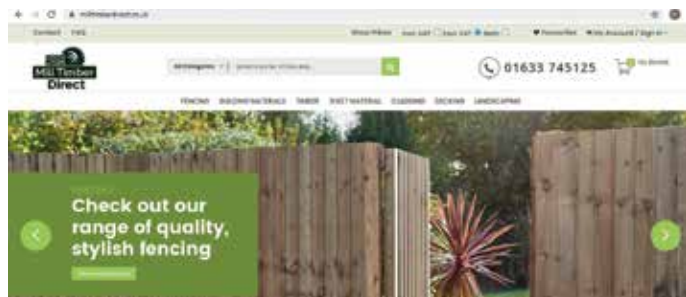
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PREMIER FORESTS MILL TIMBER DIRECT LAUNCHES NEW E-COMMERCE SITE

Following a surge in demand for their products over the last 12 months, Crumlin-based Mill Timber Direct has launched a new e-commerce site to cater for its growing customer base.

Part of the award-winning Premier Forest Group, Mill Timber Direct is an outlet store supplying a range of high-quality timber products and ancillaries direct from the on-site sawmill to both trade and the public.

The company, which has operated an outlet store from its sawmill site for five years, is responding to the needs of its customers by launching online shopping and home delivery of its full range of products across south Wales.

Items include high quality landscaping timber products such as fencing and fencing accessories, garden furniture, decking, planters and sleepers. The site will also cater to trade professionals and features a full range of building materials such as tools and accessories, aggregates, timber sheets, plasterboards, drill bit accessories and screws.

Full range of products is available at www.milltimberdirect.co.uk



ELSOMS DEVELOPS NEW PELLETTED BIRCH SEED

During the lockdown period, Elsoms seeds have developed a pelleted Birch seed that is helping aid the handling of this miniscule tree seed. Birch seed is very light and requires specialist handling to avoid over-sowing and therefore costly thinning out at a later date.

Cleaning and upgrading prior to pelleting using seed technologies used in the vegetable industry, Elsoms has proved an increase in performance for Birch seed germination, from 31% to 68%, making it suitable for pelleting. Pelleting adds weight to the seed, allowing the use of a mechanical seeder, planting a single seed in each module. This removes the need and cost of thinning.

This innovative process using high germinating seed, sown individually, helps to reduce workload for module growers, waste, and labour cost, making Birch production more cost effective.

Developed in partnership with Incotec Holland, samples will be available for trial in nurseries later this year.

www.elsoms.com

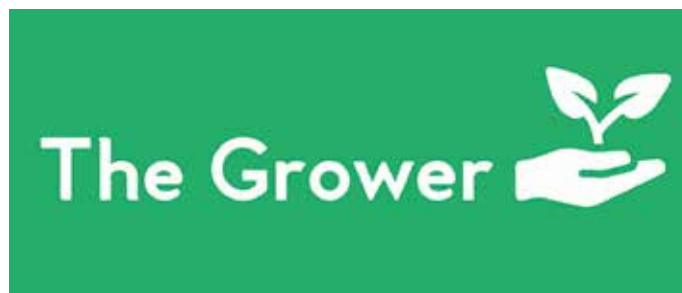
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HUSQVARNA UNVEILS LATEST GENERATION OF 90CC CHAINSAWS

Husqvarna introduce its latest generation of chainsaws within the professional 90cc segment. The two models, Husqvarna 592 XP® and Husqvarna 585, are both extremely powerful and efficient, with a level of manoeuvrability rarely found in saws of this size and power. Both chainsaws are designed for the largest and toughest jobs in both forestry and urban tree care applications, while offering maximum productivity and comfort for its user. Whereas 592 XP® delivers best-in-class cutting capacity* and an improved level of reliability thanks to a new starting technology, 585 is an extremely durable chainsaw, combining the best of traditional technology with modern features. The new 90cc chainsaw generation from Husqvarna also takes a step forward in terms of connectivity.

www.youtube.com/watch?v=mieYcOffidM



NEW NURSERY FOR THE SOUTHWEST

The Grower is a newly established family run forest nursery in the Southwest, offering wholesale supply of bareroot trees and hedging from Autumn 2021.

The range includes mainly broadleaf trees and hedging in a range of specifications and sizes to suit your requirements. We are also excited to offer contract growing.

The concept of The Grower is built on our passion for the landscape and the plants we grow. We are incredibly excited by our journey to help meet the growing requirements for planting material and look forward to sharing our story to increase awareness of where plants come from.

Please get in contact and follow The Grower's story over on LinkedIn or Instagram. www.thegrower.co.uk
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MOORLAND WILDFIRE RISK ASSESSMENT AND MANAGEMENT PLANNING

Simon Thorp, Chairman of the England & Wales Wildfire Forum (EWWF) and the Uplands Management Group, offers a summary guidance for risk assessment and planning in England.

Wildfire, defined as “Any uncontrolled vegetation fire which requires a decision, or action, regarding suppression”, is increasingly becoming a threat in our country. Wildfires can consume large amounts of vegetation and the peat and the carbon emissions associated with wildfire incidents can have a significant impact on climate change.

Wildfires can occur on any land in any part of the country; some of the larger fires occur in remote, rural locations, but those close to areas of high population can pose the greatest risk to people and property.

The main fire season in the UK is in the late winter to spring period. A second season, which is developing with climate change is now, in the late summer.

To mitigate the impact of wildfires, it is important to plan for incidents, before ignition occurs.

It is for this reason that in 2018, the Uplands Management Group was commissioned by Defra to produce guidance for England that covers an approach to wildfire risk assessment and management planning to mitigate the risks. The guidance was published in July 2019.

The work of the Uplands Management Group relates only to England, but the Welsh Fire and Rescue Services endorse the Wildfire Risk Assessment (WRA) approach through the EWWF.

To reflect the introduction of The Heather & Grass Burning Regulations 2021 in March, some revision of the guidance took place to meet the requirements of the new legislation.

Wildfire and Forestry

As a result of climate change, the risk of wildfire is deemed to be increasing and with this there is an increased risk of damage to forestry, especially young plantations. The movement to increase the annual area planted will increase the risk of losses to wildfire. It is essential that wildfire planning takes place as part of developing the management plans for old and new woodlands, including community forests.

Wildfire and Prescribed Burning Training

On behalf of Defra, the Forestry Commission is developing training to



WILDFIRE PLANNING PROCESS

WILDFIRE CHECKLIST (WCL)

The checklist provides a range of options that will meet most situations, for landowners and land managers to consider. The UMG template has space to include any special issues that relate to a particular site that are not covered by the standard descriptions. The issues identified in the checklist should be carried forward to form the list of issues to be addressed in the Wildfire Risk Assessment.

WILDFIRE RISK ASSESSMENT (WRA)

Guidance notes provide details about how to complete the WRA, which takes the form of a matrix. The WRA takes the issues identified in the WCL and sets out more information. The Likelihood and Severity are used to establish an Initial Risk Rating score and description. There is space to produce a Revised Risk Rating after recording additional action that will be taken.

WILDFIRE MANAGEMENT PLAN (WMP)

The WMP sets out the good management practices that protect people, businesses, land and property, sensitive habitats and the provision of ecosystem (natural) services.

WILDFIRE RESPONSE PLAN (WRP)

The Wildfire Response Plan aims to enhance preparedness in advance of a wildfire incident and improve the effectiveness and efficiency of any subsequent operational response. This plan should be developed with the local Fire and Rescue Service and UMG guidance includes a template to provide examples of the issues that can be considered.

provide practitioners in England with an improved understanding of wildfire management and prescribed burning techniques.

The training will provide applicants with the minimum level of knowledge to carry out prescribed burning safely and effectively and support the Fire and Rescue Services at wildfire incidents.

More details about the training packages will be published separately.

Additional Information

- Uplands Management Group website www.uplandsmanagement.co.uk/wildfire
- Forestry Commission: *Practice Guide Building wildfire resilience into forest management planning (2014)* <https://www.forestresearch.gov.uk/documents/6952/FCPG022.pdf>
- Scottish Government: *Wildfire Operational Guidance (2013)* www.gov.scot/Publications/2013/10/6118

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UPDATE ON *P RAMORUM* ON LARCH IN SCOTLAND

Clarinda Burrell of Scottish Forestry presents the result of this year's first round of surveillance flights.

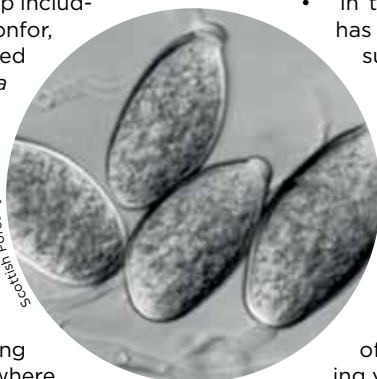
Phytophthora ramorum disease of larch continues to have a major impact on the forestry sector in Scotland, particularly in the wetter south-west area where favourable conditions are driving local reinfections.

Scottish Forestry has completed its first round of aerial surveillance helicopter flights for 2021 to assess the spread of the disease. Surveillance flights are carried out every year, followed up by ground surveys and any necessary lab testing of samples. Statutory Plant Health Notices (SPHNs) requiring the felling of larch trees infected with *P ramorum* plus larch within a 250 metre buffer zone are issued to land owners where infection is identified.

Management approaches

Following a policy review with input from a stakeholder working group including representation from Confor, Scottish Forestry published an updated *Phytophthora ramorum* on larch Action Plan in July 2021. This details areas of Scotland categorised as the Priority Action Zone (PAZ) and the Risk Reduction Zone (RRZ). These reflect the agreed management approaches outlined here:

- In the PAZ - targeting new infections in areas where the disease has not yet established as the immediate priority for control efforts. Wherever possible SPHNs will be issued for control felling to be completed by the end of August in the same year.



P ramorum spores (below) and bark infection (above)

This is a tight schedule but evidence has shown this will give the sector the greatest chance of stamping out new infections as they are identified.

- In the RRZ - the aspiration has shifted to allow annual surveys to be completed before SPHNs are issued and then give landowners more time to action the required felling operations. The bulk of the SPHNs in the RRZ will be issued in late summer/autumn with a timeline for completion of late August the following year.

Controlling rapid spread

In the right conditions, *P ramorum* can spread rapidly. The image below showing the spread of symptoms on larch within

just one year from a small area of symptomatic trees highlight why it is so important to fell infected trees as quickly as possible. Larch trees infected with *P ramorum* can produce huge amounts of spores that can be spread from the tree canopy on damp air and mist, swiftly spreading infection to other susceptible hosts in the vicinity and potentially further afield on the wind. Felling affected trees is the most effective way of controlling this spread of spores. Research has shown that the most significant periods of sporulation are in spring and early autumn, which is why SPHN operations are generally scheduled for compliance by the end of August or the end of February. The longer infected trees are left standing the greater the risk to larch trees and the sector locally.

Helicopter surveillance flights

Scottish Forestry is currently undertaking helicopter survey operations with a single survey operative, with the pilot in a parti- >>





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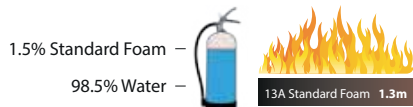
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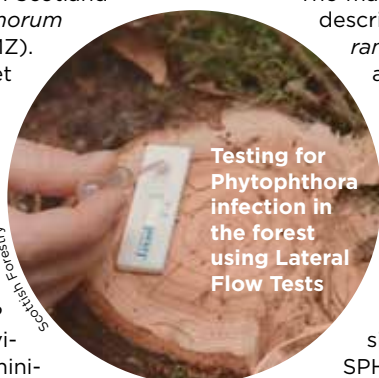
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>> tioned section of the aircraft due to Covid-19 restrictions. A total of 13 flights have been conducted so far this year, covering 95% of the larch areas in Scotland outside of the *P ramorum* Management Zone (MZ). A total of 717 target larch sites have been identified. Of these sites, 454 were identified from helicopter surveys and 263 via reports from owners, agents, foresters and other sources. Reporting of suspected *P ramorum* infection is a vital part of the effort to minimise the impact of this disease. If you own or manage a woodland containing larch please maintain vigilance, inspect your woods regularly and report any suspected *P ramorum* infection to the Scottish Forestry Tree Health Team (tree.health@forestry.gov.scot) without delay,



including a grid reference and photographs of the tree(s) plus close-up of suspected symptoms.

The map (above) shows the zones described in the *Phytophthora ramorum* on larch Action Plan and the flight paths of aerial surveys conducted so far this year. To date there is no indication of a major expansion such as that seen in 2018. The majority of suspected sites identified are within the Risk Reduction Zone, with some limited expansion in other areas where SPHNs have been served in the last two years. The most effective actions land owners and managers can take to reduce the impacts of this devastating tree disease are working with the Scottish Forestry Tree Health Team by reporting any suspected infections, assisting with any requests for information on

P RAMORUM: UPDATE ON 2021 ENGLAND SURVEY FLIGHTS

As at July, the Forestry Commission have completed eight survey flights in the South West of England: the South Coast, Midlands, North West and North York Moors. Observations of significant localised spread of *P ramorum* have been made in the South West, North West and the Peak District in areas previously confirmed with the disease. New areas of infection have been observed in the North East, including the North York Moors National Park. Based on field observations from ground survey, it is apparent that some of these sites are associated with infected rhododendron species. However some appear to be new infection probably associated with conducive weather conditions.

These flights have generated 301 target sites for ground survey. Of the 72 target sites visited so far, 57 have clear evidence of *P ramorum*, 7 are suspicious for *P ramorum* and 8 have no evidence of *P ramorum*. Ground survey is revealing symptom progression since aerial survey in many of these areas, which indicates the necessity for follow-up flights.

access so we can swiftly and safely check suspect sites, and continuing to comply with felling larch required by SPHN notices as quickly as possible and within the completion date stipulated by the SPHN. These dates are set in order to try and get infected trees felled before the next sporulation period, particularly in areas where infection is so far minimal.

P RAMORUM OVERVIEW

- ***Phytophthora ramorum*** is a non-native, fungus-like organism first discovered in the UK in 2002. It causes disease on trees, shrubs and plants in woodland, heathland, gardens and nurseries.
- **Host tree** species include larch, sweet chestnut, beech and oak, although native UK oak species have so far shown little susceptibility to infection. Key host plants in UK woodland that spread the disease are larch and *Rhododendron* spp (in particular *Rhododendron*

ponticum). It can also infect bilberry, an ecologically important plant of woodland and heathland.

- **Infection** occurs through spores dispersed in moisture, including moist air currents. Not all species that become infected produce the spores which spread the disease.
- *P ramorum* is present in a number of areas across the UK, with most infected sites in western regions where the wetter, milder climate is more favourable to the pathogen. Some cases have been

recorded in eastern areas. Forestry Commission surveillance continues to monitor trends.

- **Operational activity** on *P ramorum* is undertaken by the Forestry Commission and the Animal and Plant Health Agency. Activities includes aerial and ground based surveillance in the wider environment, nurseries, and gardens/parks, felling of infected larch, and removal of rhododendron, as well as ongoing Countryside Stewardship support for felling/replanting.

TIMBER DEMAND AND SUPPLY IN THE UK

A joint market statement from the Confederation of Timber Industries (CTI) and Swedish Wood, published on 21 July 2021, points to a likely easing of supply tension in the timber market as the pandemic eases.

With timber prices having accelerated in 2021 amidst skyrocketing demand, there has been concern how this will affect the thousands of businesses which timber supports.

Drawing on a wide array of data (cited in the report), the market statement seeks to help generate a more

nuanced understanding of the relationship between supply, demand, and prices in timber. Key insights from the report include:

- **Demand is on the rise**
Overall construction activity is expanding at the fastest pace since June 1997. Timber and joinery sales alone were up 30.5% in Q1 2020 on Q1 2019, and construction output set to grow 12.9% in 2021.
- **Record amounts of softwood are being imported**
The cumulative volume of softwood imported into the UK between January and April was 2,678,000m³.

This was a 50.6% increase on 2020 and a 17.2% increase on 2019.

- **Timber frame is projected for significant growth**

While timber frame may have a short-term impact from current market tension, the outlook remains strong both the market size and to grow for timber frame.

- **It is highly likely the market will soon stabilise**

Market analysis shows the current price increases are far outside the bounds of normal levels over the past 13 years, suggesting a price correction is very likely to follow.



More details The publication can be downloaded here <https://cti-timber.org/publications/>

NEW PRACTICAL GUIDANCE ON FORESTRY AND INVESTMENTS FOR FARMERS AND LANDOWNERS

Dr Ashley Hardaker (Postdoctoral Research Officer in the Sir William Roberts Centre, Bangor University), with contributions from Professor John Healey (Professor of Forest Sciences), has written a series of six practical guidance notes on evaluating the financial aspects of woodland creation and timber production. The guidance notes were commissioned by Woodknowledge Wales as part of their Home-Grown Homes project, sponsored by the Welsh Government, which aimed to identify transformative actions to enhance supply of local forest products in Wales.

Well-targeted tree planting on farmland is an important

means to combat climate change and enhance the supply of home-grown timber. However, woodland creation targets across the UK are not being met by tree planting on the ground. Farmers are understandably cautious because woodland creation represents a major shift in land use and long-term commitment of land, labour and capital for a farming business. The six linked guidance notes have been written to equip farmers and landowners with the knowledge and tools required to carry out some due diligence on whether investing in afforestation and timber production within their farming business might make financial sense, before reaching out for



specialist advice.

Ashley Hardaker emphasised "these guidance notes are not designed just to promote the financial benefits of woodland creation on farms. Instead, they enable a

more objective assessment by providing an introduction to the key economics tools, using simple worked examples, that farmers and landowners can use to evaluate their own potential woodland creation plans." John Healey, a member of the Institute of Chartered Foresters, added "they do not replace a full appraisal and advice by a chartered forester, but allow farmers and landowners to approach professional advisors from a more informed position".

More details The six recently published guidance notes can be accessed from the Woodknowledge Wales website www.woodknowledge.wales/home-grown-homes/afforestation

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INDUSTRY TO CO-DELIVER CLIMATE SMARTER PROJECT IN SCOTTISH SCHOOLS

Confor and the Scottish Forestry Trust have been invited to become a contributing partner to the Young Engineers and Science Clubs Programme, run by the Scottish Council for Development and Industry (SCDI).

Over the next three academic years, we will support the delivery of a Climate Smarter project in schools, and as an event partner at the SDCI's Highland celebration of engineering.

Forestry and Timber play a key role in the UK's journey towards net zero, yet there is still a need to increase awareness of sustainable forestry and the climate benefits of wood, in particular among younger audiences.

The three-year partnership is a great opportunity for our industry to go beyond ad hoc school engagements, and take advantage of the SDCI's established relationship with the education sector to

SCDI is an independent, not-for-profit membership network representing the private, public and third sectors. We seek to influence government and key stakeholders to deliver social, economic and environmental prosperity for all of Scotland. 2021 is our 90th year. www.scdi.org.uk

co-design and co-deliver STEM activities in Schools across Scotland.

Thomas Wild – Programme Manager at YESC says: "Working with industry partners brings our YESC projects to life and though partnerships like these, we are able

to connect young people to the world of work. We are delighted to be partnering with CONFOR and the Scottish Forestry Trust to bring this exciting schools project to new underrepresented audiences. The forestry and timber sector plays such a crucial role in our journey to net zero, which makes this partnership a perfect fit for our sustainability schools challenge."

More information on www.scdi.org.uk/yesc @scdiYESC @SCDInews



The Climate Smarter project: teaching children about climate emergency and sustainable buildings

Climate Smarter is an exciting topical STEM/digital skills project for second and third level pupils (Primary 6/7 – Secondary 1/2). This project is designed to enthuse and inspire pupils to think creatively to come up with solutions to the biggest global problems to face them, now, and in their future. The project takes them on a journey of investigation and experimentation to look at how we can tackle the climate emergency.

Experiments and activities can be delivered as one-off sessions in an extra-curricular club over several weeks or alongside other lessons as a full class. The programme culminates in the pupils designing and building models of their future eco-school, incorporating all their research into sustainable building materials, energy efficiency, smart controls, energy generation and responsible water use.

As industry partners, Confor and Scottish Forestry will sponsor the training and support for 15 schools in Scotland, and will benefit from a range of opportunities to raise awareness of forestry and timber to school children and their networks:

- Creating project content to embed key messaging and information within the project. Key messaging topics might be around sustainable building materials, bio-



A participating primary school showing the eco-building models they produced for a Climate smarter project

mass energy or career pathways into the forestry sector.

- Launch to coincide with COP-26 season and wider PR campaign designed by SDCI and partners
- Resource kits for project provided to 15 schools. Recommendation would be to target the Highlands local authority.
- Teacher training CPD session providing another opportunity to engage with schools
- Opportunity to provide case studies and careers talks to schools across YESC network
- Partnership creation between partici-

pating schools and local timber industries which could foster site visits, careers events and deeper engagement.

- End of academic year project competition, with Confor team invited to join judging panel
- Co-creation workshops to take place in years 2 & 3 to enhance and expand forestry content

In preparation for the academic year 2021/22, Confor and SFT will participate in the first project content co-creation sessions in early August. The aim is to distribute Climate Smarter activity kits during the month of October.

HOW WOOD IS EVOLVING

Climate change is undoubtedly the biggest threat facing us, and we know that big changes need to be made across all industries to help reduce greenhouse gas emissions, says **Sarah Virgo** of Wood for Good

The timber industry has supported a low-carbon solution for the built environment for years. Trees capture CO₂ and store it as carbon, wood products stop that CO₂ entering the atmosphere for the lifetime of that product. It supports sustainable forestry practices that grow more trees, capturing more CO₂, and it helps replace other fossil-fuel intensive products in construction.

Currently, demand for timber is soaring, particularly in the DIY and home-improvement markets. But if we are to decarbonise construction, it is crucial to continue providing accessible ways for using more wood. The timber industry is constantly evolving and innovating, finding new ways to use wood to provide flexible, beautiful, sustainable solutions for the construction and design industries and consumer.

Wood for Good have selected a few of these different ventures below that we believe showcase the different ways the timber industry is continuing to innovate, challenge and change how we use wood.

Article originally published in Wood for Good, the timber industry's promotional campaign for greater use of wood in design and construction: www.woodforgood.com

1 EGGER: TEXTURE MEETS COLOUR

Over the last couple of years, the demand for solid colour decors in kitchen and bedroom design has soared in popularity. The trend has now evolved with customers looking for a broader choice of textures similar to those created by painted timber. In 2020, EGGER introduced the Texture Meets Colour range, which allows customers to mix and match decors and textures to suit their needs. Suitable for door frontals, carcassing, wall panels and wardrobes the range is available as Melamine Faced Chipboard (MFC) that

combines different colours and textures to look like painted wood.

The MFC boards are made up of:

- 40% hack chips and sawdust
- 40% recycled material
- 20% round wood

According to EGGER, this gives the boards a negative carbon footprint of -13.3kg CO₂/m²! The solution is cost-effective and low maintenance for customers, ensuring that there are sustainable options to suit every budget and customer.



2 DANZER – 3D VENEERS



3D-Veneer allows for the design and industrial production of organic wood shapes hence 3D-Veneer ushers in a new era in wood design. While bending wood was previously restricted by narrow parameters, the introduction of 3D-Veneers opens up completely new possibilities.

During the conversion to 3D veneer the process is highly technical and

involves many challenging steps like applying glue stripes to the back face, cutting the individual stripes at an extremely low tolerance and high precision final sanding.

The ability to take a naturally low-carbon material and use it in non-traditional settings opens up possibilities for designers to specify wood over other competing materials.



3 NEARHOME

Post-covid has seen a shift in the way we approach designing offices with more emphasis on health and wellbeing in shared office spaces, and an increased interest in creating sustainable spaces. The NearHome project, supported by Scottish Government funding and Construction Scotland Innovation Council, is a new modular toolkit designed to retrofit office spaces internally with little impact on the building's external structure.

The kits are designed to create work hubs that provide safe, hygienic and connected work environments. The parts

within the kit are made from Scottish timber and include a structural timber frame and modular wall panels with wood-fibre insulation. The kit is designed to be flexible and adaptable to existing spaces, is easily deconstructed and re-used, and different elements can be tailored to each client's needs. For example, the modular wall panels can be finished with living wall elements, wood or other designs.

NearHome provides a solution to costly retrofit projects, whilst promoting sustainability, through reducing the need to demolish existing office space, and using more home-grown timber.



4 KERTO LVL

Finnish company, Metsa Wood recently launched a new hybrid sandwich wall element that aims to increase the amount of wood used in construction in an efficient and effective way.

It may seem counter-intuitive for a timber company to be working in co-operation with a concrete company, but this hybrid solution helps to encourage innovation within the concrete industry and provide more sustainable solutions to traditional building products and methods.

The hybrid wall element, Kerto LVL, allows concrete companies to create a sandwich wall with a wooden element

in it, allowing it to replace traditional fully concreted elements. This not only helps to reduce the amount of CO₂ emissions through reduction of more fossil-fuel intensive materials, it also helps to reduce operational emissions. The elements can be produced quickly offsite and is much lighter than the traditional product.

With the construction industry constantly looking for ways to become more sustainable, it will be essential to find solutions that can help to reduce emissions across all sectors. Collaboration and innovation within the construction industry as a whole will help construction become more sustainable.

5 ONE TO WATCH...

In Scotland, over 85% of new homes are built with structural timber, mostly imported from Scandinavia and the Baltics. Historically, softwood produced in the UK has been aimed at other markets but a consortium of partners in Scotland is currently working on a new project that aims to illustrate the true potential of home-grown timber rich products in construction in the UK.

The consortium consists of: Construction Scotland Innovation Centre (CSIC); Edinburgh Napier University Centre for Offsite Construction & Innovative Structures; ECOSystems Technologies; Scottish Forestry; Confederation of Forest Industries; and sustainable developer SNRG.

Using three different mass timber systems all manufactured from homegrown timber – Cross Laminated, Nail Laminated and Glue Laminated timber – and a new product – Glue Laminated Timber Portals – the team will create a full two-storey, two-bedroom apartment for SNRG to showcase at COP26 in



Glasgow in November. The consortium hopes that the project will lead to mainstream adoption of and investment in home-grown timber in Scotland and the rest of the UK.

Increasing the use of material grown in the UK will help to reduce reliance on imports, but it will also allow for timber products grown in the UK to be used in long-life projects such as housing, keeping carbon sequestered in the products out of the atmosphere for longer.

More information can be found on the CSIC website.

BRACKEN CONTROL IN FORESTRY WITH ASULOX 2021

The Emergency Approval for the use of Asulox for the control of bracken in UK forests has now been renewed.

Application rules are much the same as in 2020 and include the following advisory and statutory requirements:

Start date	1st July 2021
Last use	13th September 2021
Unused product	Returned to supplier or destroy by 31st October 2021
Rate/ha (forest)	10l/ha
Hand Held Use	Maximum concentration 1 part Asulox to 4 parts water.
Vehicular boom sprayer	Water volume of 400 - 500l/ha
Aerial application	Also permitted
Aquatic buffer Zone	5m (crop sprayer), 1m hand held sprayer
Age of crop (forest)	Use only in the first 5 years of establishment
Application Records	See 3(ii) below. This must be submitted for all applications



Notes
1. The conservation restrictions do not apply to forest use.
2. It is suggested that the minimum application rate should be 10 litres Asulox in 200l water/ha.
3. Further information can be found at the Bracken Control Group Website, specifying “Asulam”, including: i). Notice of approval. ii). Application Records. Colin Palmer.

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GB TIMBER HAULAGE SURVEY 2021 – THE LOWDOWN



Timber Transport Officer **Paul Boobyer** summarises the results and highlights of this year's hauliers survey



A survey carried out by Creel Consulting Ltd on behalf of the Timber Transport Forum during the first half of 2021 has provided our industry with some very useful information. The feedback from the participants affirms the economic benefits of the timber haulage industry to the rural economy and the livelihoods of around 1060 people across Britain. It has also highlighted some causes for concern, one of which is the dearth of HGV drivers, which has recently been brought to the nation's attention by the media.

With UK Government targets of net zero emissions by 2050, (50% by 2030 in Scotland), the Decarbonisation Subgroup of the Timber Transport Forum identified the need to have more insight into numbers, and to better understand the scale, composition, and structure of the sector. Prior to the survey, there was very little data on the timber haulage sector. One hundred and fifteen firms were initially contacted, and ninety-four firms responded, providing an impressive response rate of 81%.

The survey also asked hauliers what the biggest challenges to their businesses are. The most common issue highlighted by respondents was the poor condition of forest roads, followed by a lack of trained personnel. In third place was the increasing legislation relating to road haulage.

As well as 'numbers' the survey process demonstrated that the timber haulage

sector is specialised, relatively insular and can be fragmented. 35% of companies are not members of trade organisations. Only 9% of companies are signed up to a quality standard or assurance organisation. 85% of companies have not considered alternative green powertrain sources.

The figure of just under 500 crane equipped timber truck units was recorded. 36% of these were dedicated Wagon and drag outfits. This underlines the high level of capital expenditure investment that contract hauliers and processors currently make to service the GB industry. The sector has reacted well to new specification demands demonstrated by the high level of CTI fitted to dedicated trucks. At current, post Brexit supply chain and 'green' technology solutions are currently driving asset costs up.

THE SURVEY ALSO ASKED HAULIERS WHAT THE BIGGEST CHALLENGES TO THEIR BUSINESSES ARE. THE MOST COMMON ISSUE HIGHLIGHTED BY RESPONDENTS WAS THE POOR CONDITION OF FOREST ROADS

Truck asset replacement cycles are indicated at averaging circa 5-6 years. However, it should be noted that a percentage will be from approved used stock (often moved across from less demanding applications/sectors), so will not always brand new. With an estimated potential 500+ timber trucks on the road, and making some assumptions with a broad brush, it can be anticipated that around 75 new trucks are supplied into the sector annually. Haulage companies purchase from a range of suppliers and brands, which creates a river delta effect. At current differing HGV manufacturers all have diverse offerings and timescales on alternative fuel solutions. Additionally, it is noted by manufacturers that alternative fuel solutions for 'heavy duty' work applications such as forestry may be later in the cycle to get to market and will be expensive.

With a backdrop of lack of consideration/knowledge of alternative fuels and challenges facing the workforce, the sector will need support, education, and intervention over the next 10-year window to meet decarbonisation (and possibly) industry productivity targets.

More information Many thanks to the hauliers who participated in the survey and to Neil Stoddart of Creel Consulting Ltd who produced the survey report on behalf of the TTF. The full survey report can be seen on the TTF website: www.timbertransportforum.org.uk/latest



The list below shows the focus of the survey and the summary of responses given:

Country of main operations (England, Wales or Scotland)

Scotland: 66%, England: 23%, Wales: 11%

Average age of drivers

The most common age of drivers is 45 to 54 years old (58% of drivers)

Approximate replacement cycle of articulated trucks

4 to 5 years is the most common

Approximate replacement cycle of articulated trucks

5+ years is the most common

	Average No.	Total No.
No. of articulated timber trucks fitted with a crane	3	308
No. of six-and-drag timber trucks fitted with a crane	2	179
No. of skeletal trailers carrying roundwood	2	212
No. of general-purpose flatbed trailers kitted for carrying roundwood	4	360
No. of independent loading cranes	1	57
No. of timber trucks fitted with a CTI system	4	346
No. of employees (connected to timber haulage) incl. office and management staff	11	1,063



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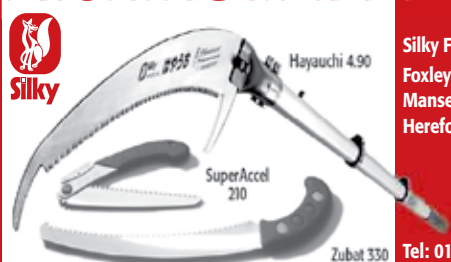
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Woodland events

I enjoy hosting or running events in my woodland and with lockdown restrictions easing I thought it would be helpful to pass on a few tips. Many who own or manage woodland will receive a request for a visit from a forestry group, a local school, a wildlife charity or even for a church fun day or family get-together. And with the benefits of 'forest bathing' – the beneficial affects to mental and physical health of being outside and especially among trees – there is increasing demand to enjoy the woodland environment.

We all want participants to leave with a feeling they've enjoyed themselves. The below key points will help in this regard and provide as safe and welcoming a visit as far as one can.

ACCESS

Providing clear directions to the location and having sufficient parking are obvious considerations; however, both are sometimes overlooked. Postcode for Satnav use or providing maps as well as written instructions are essential, but so too is clear signage on arrival to say that, 'you have made it, you are at the right destination'. I stress this as after long journeys such indicators are a genuine welcome!

Internal access of cleared tracks and paths should be good though not overdone. Your visitors are expecting a woodland environment not perfect paths everywhere. I find a single strimming along a route (if there is one) early in the year, say late May, will suffice. Also any obstacles such as fallen branches, holes, etc can be dealt with.

Some woods may have access rights – easements – for other users and care should be made not to block such routes.



Participants arriving at my wood for a RFS training day on silviculture

HEALTH AND SAFETY

I've made this the second topic, if only because it seems always the first one these days. A risk assessment and due warnings about watching where you walk, wearing suitable clothing, checking for ticks and the like is standard requirement. Under this heading and when doing the risk assessment details of the nearest hospital and other services should be noted.

INSURANCE

This is tricky. All woods should have public liability insurance for the unexpected visitor, but when events are formally laid on, and especially when being charged for, then additional insurance is definitely required. The organising body should provide this, but do check this matter carefully.

WELCOMING FACILITIES AND HOSTING

I said that signage to show you have arrived is a great way of welcoming folk, but so too is having a toilet facility and not just trees for the blokes! Obviously this is a matter of judgement as on many occasions for field visits a special toilet is not essential. Where (say) training is being done or visitors are staying for many hours or there are elderly present providing a loo is a valued comfort. Facilities communicate a welcome and set a tone, but so of course does the host. My only comment is to make sure everyone knows two things: (1) what is expected of them and what they are free to do, and (2) the day's timetable, especially concerning refreshments and when it finishes. The latter should always match what is announced in the programme ahead of the event.



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Two J.A Dayson timber lorries hauling out of a site of ours in South Lanarkshire. Our harvester is in the background working away. The dust makes for an interesting take on the recent dry weather which has been most welcome!

*Submitted by Doug Mathieson of Agriforest Ltd.
Photo: Mark Field.*

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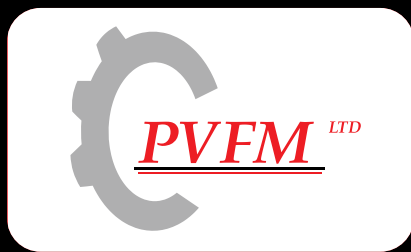
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COMING UP IN OCTOBER 2021 – GET INVOLVED

In October, we will run a feature on Environmental Innovation, perfectly timed for COP26. 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 October is 10 September 2021. If you would like to pitch an article idea, please do so by the end of August.



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