

What does Confor do for me?

Confor is working for you all year round. These are a few highlights from the past year, illustrating the real value of your membership contribution to Confor

A Stronger Voice: Political Engagement

Political engagement has continued during lockdown. Confor adapted very quickly to the new reality of virtual engagement in 2020 and has continued since, working effectively and constructively with key individuals and groups across the UK.

ALL PARTY GROUP ON FORESTRY

- 7 virtual meetings held between May 2020 and June 2021.
- Prominent guest speakers including Forestry Minister **Lord Goldsmith** and Climate Change Committee Chair **Lord Deben**.
- Record attendance: 3–5 times higher than typical in-person APPG meetings.

ENGLAND

- Frequent meetings with **Zac Goldsmith** and Defra team resulted in stronger recognition of the industry in England Trees Action Plan.
- Initiated the creation of an **Industry Leadership Group and Industry Strategy**.
- Gave evidence to the House of Commons **EFRA Committee Tree Planting & Woodlands inquiry**.
- Championed Members interests at the **Oxford Farming Conference** and questioned the Environment Secretary of State on the UK roadmap for farming and forestry.

SCOTLAND

- Held virtual **hustings** ahead of Scottish Parliament elections leading to all parties supporting Confor's election manifesto.
- Had immediate and strong engagement with the new **Forestry Minister, Mairi McAllan** after post-election Government changes.

- Engaged with **Ivan McKee, Minister for Business, Trade, Tourism and Enterprise** in relation to forestry's role in the evolving 10-year economic transformation strategy.

WALES

- Secured Labour party commitment to a **Timber Strategy** in the Manifesto literature.
- Joined **Deputy Climate Change Minister Deep Dive** as part of expert panel to succeed on Wales's tree planting challenge.
- Maintained constant dialogue with **Welsh Governments Forest Reform and Policy team**.
- Continued engagement with **Deputy Climate Change Minister Lee Waters** MS to support next steps in Forest Industry Development.

NORTHERN IRELAND

- Engaged with **Minister Poots**, and Defra, highlighting the negative impact of the Brexit, NI protocol on the ability for NI growers to import planting stock from GB forest nurseries and the negative impact this would have on achieving planting targets.



SUCCESS IN NUMBERS

The ongoing work of Confor and its Members has resulted in:

New woodland planting (from Apr 20 – Mar 21)

10,660ha

in Scotland (strong pipeline of future planting applications)

2,100ha

in England (reports of an increasing number of new applications)

290ha

in Wales (new applications rising fast)

280ha

in Northern Ireland

PLUS:

>€500m

committed within the Nature for Climate Fund for tree planting and woodland management in England

€7m

of timber transport funding allocated to 72 projects in Scotland

€1.4m

committed to the Tree Production Innovation fund, with a further €3m+ over the following 3 years.

Consultations

18

number of consultations Confor has responded to (Sep 20 – Sep 21)

Key consultations:

- UK Forestry Standard (August 2021).
- UKWAS 5 Initial Consultation (April 2021).
- Westminster committee tree planting and woodlands enquiry (October 2020).
- Westminster committee enquiry on rural support (ELMS and Agricultural Transition) in England (January 2021).
- NRW Timber Sales Marketing Plan 2022 – 2026 (November 2020).



Keeping you informed: Key workstreams



MARKETS FOR WOOD

- Secured support from Defra to establish an industry leadership group, which will include working on the development of a **Timber Policy Roadmap** for England.
- Key partner in the development team for a **Timber and Fibre Industrial Strategy** in Wales.
- Provided executive support to the Scottish Industry Leadership Group working with government on a public sector policy encouraging the use of wood, and supporting innovation in **wood product development and manufacture** from homegrown woodfibre.

EDUCATION AND SKILLS

- Helped to develop the Level 6 Professional Forester and rewrite the Level 2 Forest Operative **apprenticeship schemes**.
- Co-funded the **future work force survey of England and Wales** which will form the bedrock data to support more training for forestry workers.
- **Partnership to work with schools:** 50+ Schools in Scotland will receive science kits co-designed by Confor. The objective is to embed key messages on wood as a sustainable material into school curriculums.

PROMOTING FORESTRY IN FUTURE POLICY AND RURAL FUNDING

- Secured inclusion of forestry support in the development of the **Environmental Land Management Scheme** in England. The Farm Woodland Standard is a result of this input.
- Helped develop the new **England Woodland Creation Offer**.

NURSERIES

- Helped to develop and launch the Tree Production Innovation Fund and the Forestry Grant Scheme Harvesting & Processing option.

ENVIRONMENT

- Helped to launch the **Guidance on Responsibilities for Environmental Protection in Forestry** as part of The Forest Industry Environment Group.
- Helped to co-ordinate the **Forestry Plastics Group** and resulting research.

PLANT HEALTH

- Worked with Scottish Forestry to produce a refinement to the management regime for **Phytophthora ramorum**.
- Contributed to the **Plant Healthy Scheme** development.
- Continue to raise awareness with Zac Goldsmith and Defra of the need to eradicate **grey squirrels** and effectively control deer numbers.

TIMBER TRANSPORT

- Worked with Forestry & Land Scotland to identify and address issues arising from rolling out their planned **low ground pressure haulage** policy within the National Forest Estate.
- Played a key part in the evaluation of applications for the latest round of the **Strategic Timber Transport Scheme**.

COMMUNICATING AND ENGAGING WITH OUR MEMBERS

500

attendees across three Scottish Forest Timber Technology webinars in March 2021

30+

E-newsletters and communications updates sent to members and employees over the past year, sharing industry insight and news

40+

Confor regional and group meetings, including supply chain, Board, regional committee and technical group meetings

6

high-quality issues of Forestry and Timber News, working with Members to feature their best stories

EDUCATION AND PROVIDENT FUND

15

awards made

£12k

allocated in award money

(Sep 2020 – Sep 2021)

Changing Attitudes: Working with the media

Confor continues to forge long-term relationships with a wide range of media outlets, including broadcasters, newspapers, the farming press and online publications.



• A highlight in August 2021 was the **Radio 4 Farming Today** forestry focus, with Confor CEO Stuart Goodall and members shining a light on a wide range of important issues.

• A **Task and Finish Group on Changing Attitudes** is being set up in September 2021 to develop a PR strategy focusing on increasing wood use.



• A **Crisis Communications Guidance** document, produced in July 2021, helped key members deal with critical media approaches.