

# FORESTRY & TIMBER NEWS

October / November 2024 Issue 125

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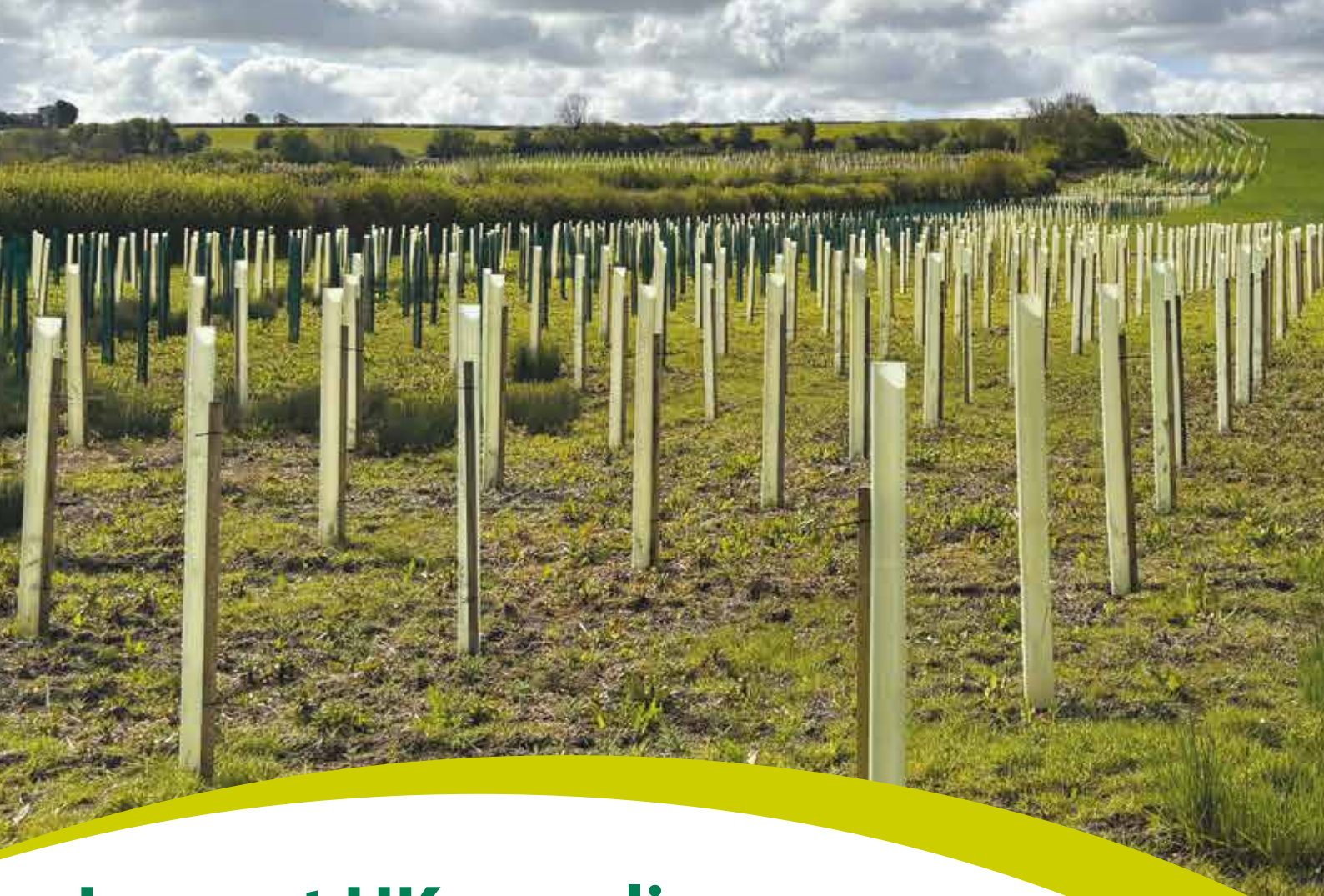
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# Policy and perception



**STUART GOODALL**  
CHIEF EXECUTIVE,  
CONFOR

September saw the second APF since the pandemic and it was a great show. I would like to thank the APF team for pulling out all the stops and delivering another fantastic showcase for the sector.

I left the APF early to travel to Liverpool for the Labour Party conference, where Confor had a stand supported by members BSW Group, James Jones & Sons and Scottish Woodlands. Over four days we had the chance to meet a wide range of ministers, shadow ministers and backbench politicians from across Great Britain.

It was particularly helpful having senior company representatives David Leslie, Andrew Henry and Dave Robertson in attendance to offer practical and often local constituency insights. Confor is now better placed to engage with the UK Labour government and the members gained a better understanding of Labour's priorities.

UK Forestry Minister Mary Creagh had a wide range of questions to ask and has clearly been thinking about forestry. I reiterated the importance of continuing with the Timber in Construction roadmap and partnering in delivery of the National Wood Strategy for England. Ms Creagh has provisionally confirmed that she will speak at Confor's London conference on 5 December (sign up soon to avoid disappointment!).

In a separate but linked activity, I participated in a recent meeting of forestry communication professionals from the four

country forestry authorities and agencies. We discussed a proposal from a UN convened group to work together on communicating the importance of productive forestry and using more sustainably produced wood.

Following high-profile, negative media in Wales on new productive forestry, we have seen recent negative media coverage in southern Scotland as well. This coverage contains a lot of misinformation and has led to an increased sense amongst politicians that people don't like forestry.

I have felt for some time that public opinion is less negative and certainly more nuanced than campaigners claim, and it is interesting therefore to reflect on the results of a recent survey undertaken on behalf of Scottish Environment Link – not a body historically supportive of commercial activity in forestry.

When respondents were surveyed on their perceptions of different business sectors related to the environment, over half (53%) rated forestry highly, and that topped out at 61% when it came to people living in the Highlands and Islands. This put forestry ahead of fishing and aquaculture, and just behind farming.

Confor will be taking this message to politicians, and it will also feature on a new forestry online Hub that we are developing. We have a good news story to tell and if we can help you communicate that please do get in touch!

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Danny Lewis 01502 725858  
[danny.lewis@micropress.co.uk](mailto:danny.lewis@micropress.co.uk)  
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**Stuart Goodall**  
Chief Executive  
T: 0131 240 1416  
E: [stuartg@confor.org.uk](mailto:stuartg@confor.org.uk)



**Andy Leitch**  
Deputy Chief Executive  
M: 07881 510171  
E: [Andy.leitch@confor.org.uk](mailto:Andy.leitch@confor.org.uk)



**Eliza Hibbins-Cline**  
Membership and Marketing  
Manager  
M: 07918 880285  
E: [eliza@confor.org.uk](mailto:eliza@confor.org.uk)



**Eleanor O'Neill**  
Communications Manager  
M: 07918 255930  
E: [eleanor.oneill@confor.org.uk](mailto:eleanor.oneill@confor.org.uk)



**Richard Hunter**  
Technical and Industry  
Support Manager  
E: [richard.hunter@confor.org.uk](mailto:richard.hunter@confor.org.uk)



**John Bruce**  
National Manager for England  
E: [john.bruce@confor.org.uk](mailto:john.bruce@confor.org.uk)



**April Armstrong**  
National Manager for Scotland  
E: [april.armstrong@confor.org.uk](mailto:april.armstrong@confor.org.uk)



**Elaine Heckley**  
National Manager for Wales  
E: [elaine.heckley@confor.org.uk](mailto:elaine.heckley@confor.org.uk)



Confor head office and editorial office  
Argyle House, 3 Lady Lawson Street,  
Edinburgh EH3 9DR



0131 240 1410



[info@confor.org.uk](mailto:info@confor.org.uk)



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**Mike Tustin** *FICFor MRICS*  
Forestry Investment Specialist  
[miketustin@tustins.co.uk](mailto:miketustin@tustins.co.uk)



**John Clegg** *FRICS*  
Forestry Expert & Agency Specialist  
[johnclegg@tustins.co.uk](mailto:johnclegg@tustins.co.uk)



**Jack Clegg** *MRICS*  
Forestry Sales & Planning Adviser  
[jackclegg@tustins.co.uk](mailto:jackclegg@tustins.co.uk)





# BUILDING DEMAND, SECURING SUPPLY

**Andy Leitch** explores why there is such a focus on increasing the use of homegrown Timber in Construction across the UK.

In recent years there has been a growing appreciation across the world of the carbon benefits of growing fast growing trees and using their sustainably grown wood fibre in long-life products to store carbon, and to substitute materials with higher embodied energy such as steel, concrete and brick.

In addition to the growing world population and increasing urbanisation, the increased awareness of the environmental benefit of storing carbon in long life wood products in construction has led to many countries implementing and/or developing policies to incentivise the use of timber in construction. Therefore, it should be no surprise that global demand for sustainably sourced wood products is forecast, by some, to quadruple by 2050.

This should be a huge red flag for a coun-

try like the UK, which is already so dependent on products from overseas, importing over 80% of the wood products we use every year. In fact, we are regularly reported to be in the top three net importers of wood products in the world alongside China and the US.

At a domestic level, the ambition to increase the use of homegrown timber in construction is a key component of most of the devolved governments' forest policies and strategy documents. It is also one of the prime drivers for governments' investing in production forestry with the aim to store carbon for as long as possible in the built environment.

Increasing the use of Scottish timber in construction is a target within the Scottish Government climate change action plan, whilst the Welsh government is currently

developing a Timber Industrial Strategy with a key theme of increasing the use of Welsh timber in Welsh buildings. And, only last year, the UK government produced the Timber in Construction Roadmap with the primary aim of increasing the use of homegrown timber in construction.

The latter is a particularly important document for England because it shares many actions with the industry-led National Wood Strategy for England, including:

- Explore options to support more productive planting of both softwoods and hardwoods in England by 2024 to meet increased demand from the construction sector now and in the future.
- Commence improved tree breeding programmes for selected timber producing tree species to diversify the range of English tree species that could be used in construc-





tion (for example structural characteristics) by 2030.

- Promote homegrown wood-based construction products as a positive contribution to net zero and promote English forestry as a “green investment opportunity”.
- Continue to promote greater rates of woodland management and explore how incentives for increasing woodland management could support increased yield of timber that can be used in construction. This will include implementing the commitments in the forthcoming deer and squirrel strategies over the next 5 years and 10 years respectively.

Discussions are ongoing with Defra and the new UK Forestry Minister Mary Creagh as to whether they will fully adopt the ambitions of the Timber in Construction Roadmap. Confor’s view is that the ultimate aims of the document fit ideally with the ambitions of the new government supporting

economic growth and new jobs, improving timber security, and climate change mitigation. It would also complement the Government target of building 1.5M new homes.

Should these initiatives prove successful at any scale, it could significantly increase demand for homegrown wood-based construction products and systems. For example, in a detailed study jointly commissioned by Confor, Timber Development UK (TDUK) and the Structural Timber Association (STA), it was illustrated that if the timber frame market share of the new build market in England moved from 9% to 40%, it would generate an additional annual demand of more than 1 million m<sup>3</sup> of C16 sawn timber and over 0.5 million m<sup>3</sup> of panel board.

This would represent a 100% increase in consumption of homegrown C16 and an increase of over 20% in homegrown particleboard. Whilst such demand, particularly in C16, could not be solely met by homegrown production in the short term, it certainly could promote additional investment in processing infrastructure in the UK, whether it be extra kilning capacity and/or a new OSB production line.

For info, UK mills currently produce approximately 30-40% of the softwood sawnwood and 70% of the OSB/particleboard used in the UK per annum.

There have been signs of housebuilders building capacity to increase their use of timber frame. For example, Bellway Homes have just announced that they intend to

double their use of timber frame in their housebuilding programme by 2030. At a recent STA conference, where I was asked to speak about opportunities for homegrown timber, there was keen interest from many companies to use homegrown timber materials.

However, it will likely require Government intervention to achieve any substantial uplift in the use of timber frame in England. Confor are working in partnership with the STA and TDUK to push Government to implement new policies that will amend building regulations to account for embodied carbon and operational carbon emissions in all building projects.

Other opportunities to increase the use of timber in construction at scale could come through innovation in new wood-based construction products such as engineered wood products and wood fibre insulation.

Ecosystems Technologies and Buckland Timber continue to strive to increase market demand for homegrown Cross Laminated Timber (CLT) and glulam. Ecosystems Technologies has been making great strides in producing homegrown CLT and integrating it into new designs for public buildings such as schools and school halls. They are currently working in partnership with the UK Department of Education on the GenZero project which aims to design and build ultra-low carbon school buildings with more natural materials. Several pilot buildings are

>>





## TIMBER IN CONSTRUCTION

>> already in place in parts of England.

Depending on scale, a CLT factory using homegrown timber may not increase overall demand significantly, but it would certainly add value, increase manufacturing in this country and raise the profile of homegrown wood products.

Edinburgh Napier University, the Built Environment - Smarter Transformation (BE-ST) centre and others are currently researching the applicability of homegrown wood fibre (softwood and hardwood) for the manufacture of wood fibre insulation. It has been widely reported that at least one company is considering an inward investment in a manufacturing plant which could utilise around 100,000 tonnes of fibre per annum.

The other area where there is a significant opportunity for growth in the use of homegrown wood fibre is in the retrofit market. The majority of homegrown C16 is currently used in the Repair, Maintenance and Improvement market, and there is opportunity for further growth here.

Confor is currently working with BSW, James Jones & Sons and Glennon Brothers to identify the barriers and challenges for further penetration of C16 into this market, especially in England. A major part of this work is engaging with merchants, architects and structural engineers to identify where we can increase sales. TDUK and the Royal Incorporation of Architects in Scotland are currently working with us to achieve our aims by promoting a short survey to the decision makers in the procurement process and hosting CPD events.

Moving forward, industry can do more collectively to increase the short and long-term demand for homegrown wood construction products. For example, we could develop an online platform that highlights



all the homegrown wood-based construction products and provides technical data for their use. We could offer generic CPD events and educational material to complement this.

We are currently in discussion with TDUK to explore how we can achieve this. Looking at the longer term, we must revisit and refresh the research programme looking at the structural properties of the additional species that we will be growing as we move towards greater diversification of species. This is essential to ensure that we choose species that will provide the volume and quality of wood that will be able to meet the future demands of the construction sector.

In summary, the timber in construction market will continue to have a huge influence on the UK forestry sector now and in the future. It is a key reason for Governments' support for productive forestry and they have ambitions to increase the use of



timber in construction.

Global and UK forecasts are that demand for wood is going to increase significantly in the coming years and therefore there will be fierce competition for imports and an increased risk to timber security for this country if urgent action is not taken. Which leads us back to our main message; in order to address timber security and achieve ambitions to increase the use of timber in construction, we need to ensure we have enough productive forestry to provide us with the annual yield of suitable timber for these markets.

## A WARM WELCOME TO NEW TIMBER TRANSPORT OFFICER

Confor is pleased to announce that Iain Catterwell has taken on the role of Timber Transport Forum (TTF) Executive Officer.

Confor manage the contract on behalf of the TTF. Iain has been in forestry all his working life, has an honours degree in forestry from Aberdeen and is a Technical Member of IOSH. His work experience includes twenty years in timber harvesting and marketing with Euroforest Ltd, independent forestry consultancy, harvesting operations management, and five years as the Argyll Timber Transport Group Project Officer.

Andy Leitch, Confor Deputy Chief Executive, said: "We are delighted that

Iain has been appointed to this important post for industry. With his depth of experience and connections, Iain is well-placed to re-invigorate the work of the Forum, facilitating positive relationships within the industry and between industry and local authority stakeholders."

Commenting on his new post, Iain said: "The Forum and Regional Groups have been tremendously successful in keeping timber flowing to the market over the years. However, with staff turnover in both Industry and Local Authorities it's essential that we maintain existing relationships and establish new contacts where needed.

"At a time when budgets are under great pressure throughout the economy, it's critical that we make the best use of

the limited resource available. Productive forestry is key to the commitment to net zero and should be a good news story for all concerned; it simply isn't acceptable to have timber effectively landlocked for want of effective transport communication.

"The Forum is here to facilitate this and promote best practice in all aspects of timber transport."

Iain works from home in Argyll, 'hot desking' in the Confor office in Edinburgh as appropriate and travelling the country as required. He looks forward to hearing from members of the TTF on all things timber transport related.

### Get in touch

Iain Catterwell BSc Hons Forestry, TechIOSH  
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# A BUMPY START AND BROAD BUDGET

Confor's **Jon Garson** considers the ripple effects for the forestry industry as Labour settles into Government.

After the decisive election victory Keir Starmer and the Labour government could be forgiven for expecting a celebratory conference in Liverpool after securing government for the first time in 14 years. However, the recent Labour Party Conference was overshadowed by media stories regarding expenses and an embarrassing (albeit non-binding) union-led vote calling for a reversal on the decision to means test the winter fuel allowance.

Following the conference the sense that this was a government reacting to events rather than setting and pursuing its agenda was further reinforced by media stories over turmoil and in fighting in Number 10. This resulted in a shock announcement that the Prime Minister's Chief of Staff, Sue Gray, would be leaving office.

While this all adds up to a rather bumpy start, the real test has come with the Chancellor's unveiling of her first Budget, which is always a difficult balancing act. Any new Chancellor must find a way to set a tone for the next four years while also beginning to set out how they will deliver on the priorities of the new government.

As we said in the last political update, this is made far more difficult by the conditions the Chancellor has placed on adhering to the previous government's fiscal framework on spending and deficits while also ruling out tax increases on the big-ticket items, personal, business, VAT or National Insurance. When combined with a reported £22 billion fiscal spending deficit the implications for all sectors, including forestry, are significant.

Confor has continued to engage government on the importance of forestry to the economy and to our collective goal to achieve net zero. For the second year running Confor was a visible presence at the Labour Party Conference in Liverpool where our team, led by our CEO Stuart Goodall, engaged with numerous party officials, MP's, Ministers and Cabinet Secretaries.

We have had confirmation that the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs Mary Creagh will be the keynote speaker at the upcoming Confor Policy Conference in London in December.

Confor is also in the process of re-establishing an All-Party Parliamentary Group in Westminster with a renewed focus on Forestry and Timber Security for this Parlia-

ment and work is progressing on establishing a new Cross-Party forestry group in the Senedd.

With an election not far behind us, many would be forgiven for thinking that the hard work is over. Nothing could be further from the truth. With elections in Scotland and Wales in 2026 and a new government looking for ways to create economic growth in a constrained fiscal environment, forestry has a strong message to deliver - but we face significant competition.

As an organisation and as a sector our biggest advantage is the fact that we are integral parts of communities across the country. We will need to harness that advantage in the coming months so will be looking to increase member engagement in coordinated advocacy at all levels in all four nations.

## AUTUMN BUDGET 2024

Confor welcomes the "over £400 million of support for tree planting and peatland restoration" allocated in the Autumn Budget for the next two financial years and hopes for constructive conversations with the UK Government on forestry and timber use more generally, and budgets for tree planting specifically, in the coming weeks. It is important that the funding supports the aspiration to increase the level of woodland creation in England, with an increased focus on wood production.

Through the Barnett Formula, UK expenditure announced in the budget is allocated to the devolved administrations. The Chancellor has claimed that this year's is "the largest real-terms funding settlement since devolution," represented by an "additional £3.4 billion for Scotland, £1.7 billion for Wales and £1.5 billion for Northern Ireland."

Following savage cuts to the Scottish planting budget in 2024/25, Confor will lobby hard for an increase in the funding for 2025/26 and 2026/27.



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# CONFOR LAUNCHES NEW GUIDE TO STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

'Engagement with Local People and Communities: Good Practice Guidance for Woodland Creation Proposals' published in October.



A groundbreaking Guide intended to improve the process of engagement with local people and communities in new woodland creation projects in Scotland has been launched.

The Guide was prepared by individuals from across south Scotland with experience in responding to applications to create new woodlands and by people working in Scotland's forestry industry, with the advice and support of Scottish Forestry and the Scottish Land Commission.

"The Scottish Government's vision is to expand woodlands to cover 21% of Scotland's land area by 2032 as a vitally important part of its commitment to achieve net zero by 2045", said Stuart Goodall, CEO of Confor. "Ultimately, the aim of the Guide

is to improve the process for local people, communities and the people seeking to create new woodland, and to enable Scotland's forestry and wood processing sector to make a vital contribution to tackling catastrophic climate change."

"This Guide is the culmination of a lot of hard work by people who want to improve the process of engagement with local people and communities on new woodland creation projects", explained Morag Paterson from Communities for Diverse Forestry. "It's because of their positive approach and willingness to openly discuss the issues around engaging people in new woodland creation projects that has enabled this important Guide to be prepared."

Cabinet Secretary Mairi Gougeon has

welcomed the launch of the Good Practice Guide.

"Meaningfully engaging communities in discussions about woodland creation projects is crucial as we strive to increase woodland cover across Scotland.

"Engagement with communities during the project development and approval process helps to ensure that their aspirations and concerns are taken into account when decisions are being made about the places they live and care about.

"I welcome this guidance, particularly as it has been developed collaboratively with community representatives and with the aim of supporting more and better engagement in the woodland creation process."

The launch took place at Corsock Village Hall, followed by a visit to the Glaisters Bridge Community Woodland Site.

The Glaisters Bridge Community Site is part of an innovative partnership between Foresight Sustainable Forestry Company (FSFC) and Upper Urr Environment Trust (UUET), with the land leased to the local community.

"This is a new concept, with the land leased to the community – the first time this has been done in this way on a commercial forestry site in the region or in fact the wider UK! The 20 -year lease with the Upper Urr Environment Trust gives the community a partnership role for public amenity or biodiversity improvements taking place", explained McNabb Laurie, from Dumfries & Galloway Woodlands, and a Trustee of Upper Urr Environment Trust.

## MEMBER UPDATE

# CONTINUE GETTING THE MOST FROM YOUR MEMBERSHIP



**Eliza Hibbins-Cline,**  
Membership &  
Marketing Manager

It was marvellous to see so many Members at APF 2024; we hope you enjoyed your visit, and for those who didn't attend, don't worry, we have a summary of events in this very issue!

With the summer now behind us, and we look forward into the colder season, we have the Policy Conference upcoming on 5 December in London. For those interested in forestry policy, it's an unmissable event with a range of speakers and

networking opportunities. To purchase your ticket please visit our website and remember Confor Members get discounted tickets!

A big thanks to those who have already arranged payment for the 2024-2025 Confor Membership subscription – we appreciate your ongoing support. For those who haven't yet paid, I would kindly encourage you to do so as soon as possible (you then won't have to receive my reminders in your inbox).

If you have any queries with regards to your subscription payment, please don't hesitate to get in touch with me at [eliza@confor.org.uk](mailto:eliza@confor.org.uk). I am here to help!

I would also encourage members (now we are entering our new subscription year) to leave any feedback on Confor services

through our Membership Survey (scan the QR code or visit the Members Area of our website). We welcome your opinions!

Your support enables us to promote the forestry industry, but we also want to support you, so if you have a suggestion on how we can make Confor better please let us know.

A big welcome to our newest members:

**Scotland:** Mr A Macqueen and Mr D Gittins. **Wales:** Iwan Meirion. **England:** Vertinetik Limited; Doyle Machinery Limited; Mr J Ellis; Mr N Berry; Holme Lacy College and Mr J Turner. **Northern Ireland:** Westland Horticulture Ltd.

## Contact

Eliza on 07918 880285  
or email [eliza@confor.org.uk](mailto:eliza@confor.org.uk)



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Ash Dieback and other tree diseases continue to spread at pace throughout the UK. It is anticipated that up to 97% of all Ash trees could be lost. Ash and other species at risk are widespread in woodlands and roadside edges. This causes a considerable liability risk to landowners associated with falling trees, especially adjacent to footpaths, highways, and property. Early intervention is always advised to minimise cost and maximise value.

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# CELEBRATE INDUSTRY LEADERS AND ICONS IN 2025

Nominations and bookings for the 2025 Confor Dinner & Awards now open

The Confor Dinner & Awards grow year on year, with 2024 seeing the highest number of attendees and nominations we have ever had. We will be returning to Surgeons Quarter, Edinburgh on 19 February 2025, and you can now put forward the industry professionals and organisations making a difference.

Our judges are looking for outstanding individuals and businesses with achievements in any of four categories:

## Future Leader

This award is presented to an individual with outstanding skills, who has the potential to be a leader in the forestry and timber sector – someone showing initiative, passion and making a real difference to the sector.

## Changing Attitudes

This award is presented to an individual, business or organisation promoting the forestry and wood sector in a positive, impactful way – through personal engagement, campaigning or communication, social media, or other ways.

## Building Industry Resilience

This award is presented to an individual, business or organisation taking action to future-proof the forestry and wood sector through impactful research, innovative technology development, or skills-building initiatives.

## ENTRY CRITERIA & AWARD INFORMATION

Submit a nomination via the Confor website or download an entry form to enter by email. All submissions must be received by 13 December 2024.

- All nominees must be currently working in the forestry and wood-using sector.
- You do not have to be a Confor Member to submit a nomination.
- Being nominated or shortlisted in previous years does not prohibit a

nominee from being nominated again.

- Judges may, where appropriate, move entries to another category better suited to the nomination submitted.
- Nominees will be contacted by Confor after entries close.
- All category shortlists will be announced in the February 2025 edition of *Forestry & Timber News*.
- Winners will be announced at the Confor Dinner & Awards 2025.

ness or organisation taking action to future-proof the forestry and wood sector through impactful research, innovative technology development, or skills-building initiatives.

## Net Zero

This award is presented to an individual, business or organisation making a specific and measurable contribution to the forestry and wood industry's efforts to deliver the UK's net zero ambitions.

We are also pleased to announce we will be accepting nominations for the prestigious

**Confor Dedicated Service to Forestry award.** If you would like to nominate someone for this honour, please send the nominee's name to [stuartg@confor.org.uk](mailto:stuartg@confor.org.uk) and explain:

- How the individual has gone above and beyond in their contributions to the success of the forestry and wood industry.
- Details on the wider benefits and impact of their work on the forestry and wood sector.
- How this individual's approach and achievements stand out against other individuals in the forestry and wood sector.



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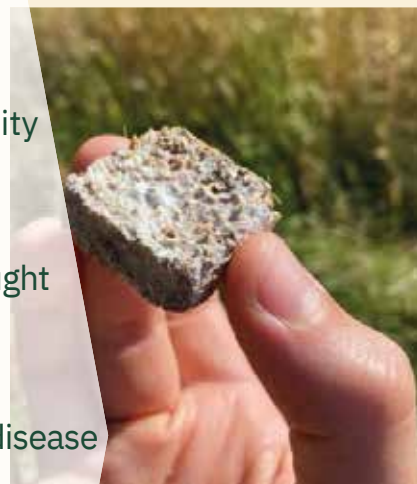
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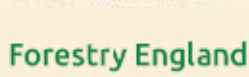
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# A TEAM EFFORT

Pierre Talpe, Director of Rainbow Professional, spoke to Confor about being awarded the Net Zero Award at the Confor Dinner & Awards 2024.

## HOW DO YOU FEEL ABOUT WINNING THE NET ZERO AWARD?

The Rainbow team is extremely proud of the award.

Reducing the footprint of both our business and the products we manufacture is an effort that is central to our everyday efforts. It requires an effort from everyone, from the engineers to the buying team, warehouse, production operatives, all the way to how our sales and marketing people explain and promote this to our customers.

For that reason, it's really exciting to have an award that we can display at Rainbow and recognises the efforts of everyone in the team.

## HAS DEVELOPING THE RAINBOW TERRA TAUGHT YOU ANYTHING NEW?

Absolutely, we are learning things all the time as we develop our products and as we are getting questions from customers. This is super important to keep improving our products.

## HOW WOULD YOU LIKE TO SEE THE INDUSTRY EVOLVE TOWARDS NET ZERO?

To be fair, we do see the industry really making an effort already. We like to see everyone taking the steps that are possible and try to factor that in as an element in

their buying criteria.

Next to that, we really enjoy when customers make an effort to really understand the differences between various "green" products and communicate the differences to their clients as well.

We believe that more budget for sustainable products can be unlocked by collaborating closely to translate the impact various sustainable products help achieve in terms of avoiding new oils, reducing carbon footprint and litter to all the stakeholders involved.

## WHAT HAS BEEN RAINBOW PROFESSIONAL'S BIGGEST ACHIEVEMENT SO FAR?

We would probably say that the development of the Rainbow Terra range has been our biggest achievement so far.

## WHAT DO YOU HOPE TO ACHIEVE NEXT?

We plan to continue to do work on both reducing the impact of our plastics and biodegradable range and connect with the industry to see how we can do our part.







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# LONDON CALLING

Confor's annual Policy Conference will ask what a Labour Government means for the forestry and wood processing sector.

Working in partnership with Government, Confor has helped secure progress on a range of activities in recent years, from woodland creation to wood use and skills. Now, with a new Labour Government and Forestry Minister in power, our conference in London will seek to shine a light on how they can work with industry on crucial issues like timber security, sustainable house building and rural economic growth.

The 2024 conference is called *Green Growth Through Forestry and Wood* and UK Forestry Minister Mary Creagh has provisionally agreed to be the keynote speaker.

Last year's event saw the launch of the National Wood Strategy for England, following on from the publication of a Timber in Construction Roadmap. Confor believes it is vital to the success of the sector that these key documents continue, and there will be updates on both at the conference, as well as the latest news on a sector skills plan.

The Minister will also be asked for an update on expected strategies on deer and grey squirrel management.

The conference will also hear from senior representatives from Forestry Commission and Welsh Government, as well getting an international perspective on forestry and timber from Ross Hampton, Executive Director of the International Sustainable Forestry Coalition, and Paul Brannen, Director



of Public Affairs for the European Confederation of Woodworking Industries (CEI-Bois).

Stuart Goodall, Confor Chief Executive, said: "A great deal of vital work has been done in the past few years to promote the industry and highlight the importance of a reliable, sustainable homegrown timber supply for the UK – future timber security has not been given the importance it deserves."

"Forestry and timber have a significant part to play in helping the new Labour government meet its economic and environmental goals. We are an industry worth £3 billion to the economy, providing low-car-

bon materials for Labour's ambitious house building programme, forging ahead on net zero, continually creating jobs and investing in a skilled workforce."

"There is scope for much more investment and growth if the Government can work with Confor to provide the confidence that industry needs."

Tickets for *Green Growth Through Forestry and Wood* are available for purchase on our website ([www.confor.org.uk/resources/events](http://www.confor.org.uk/resources/events)). The conference is kindly sponsored by Scottish Woodlands Ltd, Tilhill Forestry (BSW Group) and Gresham House.



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# CONFOR LEADS INDUSTRY DELEGATION TO LABOUR PARTY CONFERENCE

**David Lee** reports from the 2024 Labour Party Conference in Liverpool. Confor and industry representatives made connections with policymakers and new government officials over the four-day event.

A delegation of forestry and wood interests, led by Confor, took the trees and timber message to Government by engaging with Forestry Minister Mary Creagh MP and a wide range of politicians at the Labour Party conference in Liverpool.

The industry team attended fringe events and receptions, as well as briefing politicians from across the UK at the Confor stand in the exhibition hall at Labour's largest-ever party conference - with more than 20,000 people there.

Senior staff from James Jones & Sons Ltd (JJS), Scottish Woodlands Ltd (SWL) and the BSW Group joined Confor's Chief Executive Stuart Goodall in talking about the enormous benefits of trees and timber to Minister Creagh and her colleagues at the Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs - Emma Hardy MP and Baroness Hayman, Defra spokesperson in the House of Lords.

Toby Perkins MP, previously Shadow Forestry Minister and now Chair of the influential Environmental Audit Committee, also came to the stand to speak to Stuart Goodall and industry colleagues Andrew Henry, Nursery Director with Maelor Forest Nurseries (part of BSW Group); David Leslie, Joint Managing Director of JJS; and David Robertson, Investment & Business Development Director with SWL.

There was a strong focus on the business benefits of forestry and wood



**Stuart Goodall,  
Mary Creagh MP,  
David Robertson  
& David Leslie**

and the team met former Cabinet minister Douglas Alexander, now a Trade Minister after returning to Westminster as MP for East Lothian. There was also a meeting with Daniel Johnson MSP, who speaks on business issues for Labour in the Scottish Parliament, Cabinet member Ian Murray MP, Secretary



**Stuart Goodall  
& Daniel  
Johnson MSP**



**David Robertson,  
Steve Witherden MP  
& Stuart Goodall**

of State for Scotland and Labour's leader in Scotland, Anas Sarwar.

"Getting the Labour Party to recognise the significance of our £2 billion industry was a key focus for us at Liverpool," Mr Goodall said. "It was especially valuable to have a detailed conversation with Mary Creagh as the new Forest Minister - and I look forward to having further engagement with her at our policy conference at Westminster on 5 December, and in the run-up to it.

"It was also crucial to engage with the business and trade team and explain how our industry can support the new UK Government's economic priorities - particularly around rural growth and jobs, sustainable housebuilding and timber security.

"Forestry and wood can have a significant economic impact - as well as playing a key role in the UK's journey to net zero. In that context, it was great to speak to Douglas Alexander, who visited Alba Trees and Glennon's Windymains sawmill with Confor earlier this year and is now playing a prominent role in Labour's trade and business strategy."

Another important focus was meeting newly-elected MPs who have forestry and wood interests in their constituencies - including David Smith MP (North Northumberland), who took England's most northerly constituency for Labour for the first time, and Joe Morris MP, who won neighbouring Hexham.

Other new MPs who visited the Confor stand to be pictured with the pledge card to support the forestry and wood industry included Mary Foy, Steve Witherden, Lee Pitcher, Graeme Downie, Josh Dean, Liz Twist, Frank McNally, Kenneth Stevenson, Blair McDougall and Torcuil Crichton. Confor also welcomed Baroness Young of Old





**Andrew Henry, David Robertson,  
Stuart Goodall,  
Baroness Hayman & David Leslie**



**Andrew Henry,  
David Robertson,  
David Smith MP,  
Stuart Goodall &  
David Leslie**



**Mary Foy MP &  
Stuart Goodall**

Scone, long-term member of Confor's All-Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) on Forestry and Tree Planting at Westminster, and Jukka Siukosaari, the Ambassador to the UK from Finland, which has the highest tree cover in Europe - almost 74%, compared to less than 15% in the UK.

Mr Goodall said: "It was a pleasure to speak to so many constituency MPs from across the UK, some of whom we have engaged with before and others who are new to parliament. It was great to hear so many of them are keen to engage with us - including supporting the APPG in future - and find out more about our industry and its ability to deliver for our economy and environment."

David Leslie, Joint Managing Director, James Jones & Sons, said: "I was very encouraged by the interest in the sector shown by politicians I met, especially our sawmill development at Durham and a committed industry investment of £300m+ over the next five years in this area."

"The Government's plan for 1.5 million new houses in its first term will require a substantial uplift in the use of timber, which is very encouraging. Timber will not only facilitate new construction, but also significantly help the drive towards Net Zero through carbon storage in timber-frame buildings."

"It was said at a Fringe event: 'It's time for timber. The opportunity of a lifetime has to be grasped in the lifetime of the opportunity. And that opportunity is now.'"

Andrew Henry, Nursery Director with Maelor Forest Nurseries (part of BSW Group), said: "It was a very informative experience to be at the Labour conference and attend fringe events to understand better the policy challenges that the government have."

"The conference was an ideal location to talk as an industry to politicians and party members, including several members of the Defra team - to communicate to them what is important to the forestry industry and

how that relates to Government policy on a wide range of issues that affect the forestry, wood based industries and the use of UK wood in the construction sector."

David Robertson, Investment & Business Development Director with Scottish Woodlands Ltd, said: "The election has seen lots of new MPs elected in constituencies where we have offices and forests - including David Smith in North Northumberland and Steve Witherden in Montgomeryshire and Glyndŵr [in north Wales]. They were really keen to engage, as were the Forestry Minister, Mary Creagh, and other members of the Defra team. There's a great deal to build on from the conference."

Stuart Goodall concluded: "We were very pleased to have the active support of member companies at the conference - politicians benefit from speaking with business leaders, and we were able to attend a wider range of events and to meet more politicians, highlighting the value that forestry and wood businesses bring to rural communities across the UK."

"After Liverpool, the next steps in our UK political engagement are reforming the All-Party Parliamentary Group in October, and our policy conference at the QEII Centre at Westminster in December. It's crucial for us to keep up the momentum and show why the forestry and wood industry is so important to the UK's economy and environment - and how it can align with the UK Government's priorities."



# LOGIE TIMBER FESTIVAL RETURNS

The aptly named Logie Timber Festival returned to the picturesque Logie Steading after a five-year break on 7-8 September. Confor's **April Armstrong** went along to support the exhibitors and talk about forestry in Scotland.



Even before the gates officially opened on the Saturday morning, there was a real buzz about the Logie Estate with a wide range of timber-related businesses and stalls setting up in anticipation of the crowds. The festival showcased everything from practical horse logging demonstrations and forestry machinery to wood fuelled hot tubs and the work of local wood-based artists.

There were plenty of activities for the whole family, including a wide range of local produce and food stalls, opportunities to see ferrets and birds of prey with the Great Glen Ferret Association and Speyside Falconry, archery lessons with Bow Hunter Archery, axe throwing sessions with Wooden Tom, and a chance to join Aaron Sterritt and have a go at green woodworking.

Scottish Forestry put on an excellent programme of events under the title 'Inspiring Future Forest Industries', and specific themes on each day. For Saturday, this was 'Industry Innovations', with presentations in the morning from Scottish Forestry, Forestry and Land Scotland and Confor, providing an overview of Forestry in Scotland, Accessing Logs and Locally Based Forestry, the Woodland Carbon Code and Support for Forestry Businesses.

In the afternoon in the main marquee there was a series of films and talks from



Hester Robertson of CloudForest, who presented 'Stronger Connections Between Healthy Forests & Healthy Homes'. Dan Ridley-Ellis from Edinburgh Napier University then spoke on 'A Wider Range; Adapting the Future Wood Value Chain', and ASH RISE provided an introduction to SFMA's upcoming film and exhibition about ash dieback and timber.

On Sunday the theme was 'Inspiring the Next Generation', taking the shape of a morning of talks all geared towards inspiring and informing young people about the opportunities that exist for careers in forestry and how to get there. Liz Barron-Majerik of LANTRA gave a talk titled 'Working in Forestry, the Wood and the Trees'. Kathy Li, Rob Colvin and Gina Wall from the Glasgow School of Art and Architecture spoke about the use of timber in art and architecture, and Dee, Finlay and Josie Ayers

representing Young Scot presented 'Young Voices from Scotland's Young People's Forest Panel'.

Finally, Claire Wightman on behalf of the Institute of Chartered Foresters gave an overview of forestry training opportunities and routes into the sector for those interested in joining the industry.

Throughout the weekend there were also practical demonstrations with ASHS providing a log grading practical, Tom Warren from BE-ST showcasing timber in engineering and innovative timber products, and Ted Wilson Silviculture introducing Martelloscope - a new digital pruning and felling app.

A whole day was barely enough to really appreciate the wide range of information and activities on offer, and many chose to attend the whole weekend. The festival truly provided an educational and fun day out for all with its key success in providing a snapshot of all that encompasses the forestry and timber industry.

The festival beautifully framed all the good that can come out of working with our environment and natural resources and it was a great opportunity for community members in the region to gain a greater understanding. It was a fantastic event and something that would be worth mirroring around the country.



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# NEW IPM CONFERENCE THE OPPORTUNITIES FOR FORESTRY

**Richard Hunter** represented Confor at NEW IPM, an annual symposium gathering researchers and end users of pest management solutions.

**T**he NEW IPM conference hosted by Swansea University was a mass of global accents, with speakers from Italy, Croatia, America, Russia, Canada, and from across the UK. Without delving into the history of Hylobius and other pest management, we as an industry are aware of the urgent need for new ideas to continue to protect our trees.

While not all of NEW IPM's three days covered forestry, there were a considerable number of speakers that have the potential to cross from horticulture or agriculture into forestry.

The Tree Health session chaired by Confor began with an introduction to forestry by myself, highlighting the opportunities that forestry has for collaboration. The talk was well-received and started several conversations which will be followed up by the Hylobius Industry Research Programme.

Unfortunately, Dr Roger Moore was unable to attend as intended and it fell to myself to deliver his presentation on Hylobius. No matter how well presented it may have been, I was always going to a poor substitute for Roger, given his work and experience on the pest.

Other notable forestry speakers included Lea Brandes from Forestry England discussing changes in FE forest nursery at De-

lamere, with points on how much is grown under glass, automation where possible, and the alternative species that are being grown. She also touched on challenges such as changes to the growing media and the affect that has on the tree and therefore pest impact potential.

This was followed up by Euan Wilkie with observations from Scottish Woodlands field trails on various methods to protect trees, both the successes and failures. Alice Snowden of Cheviot Trees concluded the day with a UK nurseries wish list, highlighting big ticket items like drone usage but also very specific topics including prevention of twisting in Prunus tips.

## The Oak Lace Bug threat

The Tree Health session was not just UK focused; the conference also hosted Dr Milan Pernek from Croatia to fill us in on Oak Lace Bug (OLB). Found across the southwest of Europe and just reaching Germany, OLB has turned out to be a major pest of oak, causing leaf discolouration and death by early summer.

Dr Pernek's work began with considering what controls OLB in its native land, but unlike Dendroctonus which has Rhizophagus as a sole predator, there is no similar option for OLB. However it was observed

that OLB suffered from attack by the fungus, *Beauveria pseudobassiana*. This is a native fungus in Croatia but only found at low levels in the environment.

Though work has been undertaken to upscale *B. pseudobassiana*, after several years the field results were not as positive as in the lab. Therefore, there is still no conclusive product for OLB control, which is a concern as it is not that far from our UK shores.

It was during this speaker that an alert about Plane Lace Bug (PLB) was brought to attention. PLB is a native of North America but widespread in Europe so it is likely we may need to call on our European counterparts to see how they have tackled this pest.

The other international forestry speaker was Jarl Petterson from Norway. Jarl works for Norsk Wax, producer of a protective coating sprayed on trees to prevent Hylobius from attacking. This method has received mixed reviews in the UK, mainly due to our high Weevil population.

## Strengthening networks

Confor's presence at the event was to generate new contacts, which was done very successfully.

*continued on p26*



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*continued from p24*

Highlights of additional sessions and speakers included Vectors and Nuisance Pests, a focus on lure and kill for several species like mosquitos. Due to the diseases carried by the little blood suckers, there is a considerable amount of research going into the topic.

However, there are things to learn here that we can be ready for in forestry. For example, the bed nets have been very successful; so successful that the mosquitos have adopted behavioural adaptations to come out earlier in the evening when people are not under the safety of the nets. The takeaway from this is that we need to utilise a range of mitigation methods and not become complacent with one type of control.

Solutions to other pests that are being considered include the use of botanical based products. These have a lower risk of resistance but often don't have the same high kill rate that manufactured insecticides do. The example of the codling moth (an apple pest) was given as an insect that has started to show resistance to Coragen. In the Netherlands, they use mating disruption to prevent the moth from breeding by releasing a mass of pheromones - a strategy that could be used for Hylobius



control with specific industry research.

The Bee Health and Entomovectoring session was very insightful, given how much humans rely on bees. The concept involves getting bees to walk through an agent (such as a targeted fungicide) when

leaving the hive which they then transfer to flowers. This can also be implemented the other way round to take powder agents into the hive to target Varroa mite.

Another recurring topic was the Baeuveria fungus. This is a low level, often native fungus to many places across the world that is being explored by several different organisations for its ability to kill different insects. It was mentioned several times across the event and one to watch out for in the future.

The issue of Asian Hornets was also addressed and, while not a forestry pest, they have the potential to be a forest danger. They like to nest high up in trees, ideally in sheltered spots, so commercial forestry is ideal. When a nest is disturbed, they attack mercilessly.

The gala dinner held in the Great Hall banquet room saw the presentation of awards including one to David Edwards for Tilhill's continuing contribution to sustainable forestry. Compared to the rest of the campus which is all stone and brick, the banquet room was a celebration of timber engineering and wood cladding.

Overall the event has created the opportunities for the forestry sector to engage with others and work together to battle our respective pests.

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# MAKING TIMBER HOMES WORK FOR DEVELOPERS AND DESIGN

Award winning Fraser/Livingstone Architects outline the technical and practical challenges of building timber housing and explain how they tackled them with Simon Square, a developer-led CLT residential development in Edinburgh.

**B**uildings and the construction industry have played a significant role in the manifestation of the climate emergency, believed to contribute around 40% of global carbon dioxide emissions. Therefore, a radical change is needed to the design of the built environment that responds to the demands to decarbonise while creating enduring communities with sustainability at the heart of any proposals.

Scotland has long been the frontrunner in timber frame construction, particularly in the volume housebuilding sector with more than 80% of new build homes built in timber compared with only 23% in England. Timber frame construction is cost-effective, energy efficient, and could tackle some of the challenges facing the industry. However, it is not without its drawbacks.

Through continual development to engineer the timber down to its smallest possible size for efficiency, it has become susceptible to rot, and precautions are required to prevent interstitial condensation forming within the frame. CCA, the most common rating of timber, was treated with Copper Chromium Arsenic to protect it from moisture up until 2006. With the rise in fuel poverty and a need for people to find alternative ways to heat their homes, many are resorting to burning this type of waste wood, which releases toxins into the air; counterintuitive to the benefits timber construction is capable of providing.

To further protect timber, a standard method is to install a vapour control layer (VCL) to prevent moisture getting into >>



## TIMBER IN CONSTRUCTION

>> the build-up in the first place. However, this can also prevent toxins escaping from our homes with the result being we're essentially living in poly bags requiring extra mechanical ventilation to ensure we can breathe.

### Industry response

The construction industry has pledged to act upon decarbonisation with a swift uptake in signatories to initiatives such as Architects Declare, instigated in 2019. However, the reality is the physical manifestations of these pledges have been slow to emerge despite the criteria to "Advocate for faster change in the industry towards regenerative design practices..."

That said, Passivhaus accreditation is coming to the forefront of conversation within the housing market with a focus on a reduction in operational energy and therefore the associated carbon and users' energy bills. This is of course a good start but heavily relies on installing membranes within the external envelope to provide high levels of airtightness. It could be that the extensive layering undermines the benefits of using timber as the embodied carbon, transportation and education of the use of these buildings is actually heightened and brings a level of complexity the industry is not yet fully equipped to deal with.

Coupled with material shortages in the UK caused by Brexit and the war in Ukraine, perhaps the answer is to in fact build more simply; by adopting a vernacular approach using fewer, locally sourced materials. To this end, mass timber is also slowly emerging as a popular construction methodology and is widely used and manufactured in Europe.

Currently there are over 500 Cross Laminated Timber (CLT) buildings in the UK with Simon Square being the first commercial developer-led CLT residential development in Scotland.

CLT panels are formed from layers of structural grade sawn timber boards called lamella, laid perpendicular to one another and glued under high pressure to create large panels that can be used to form walls floors and roofs. The timbers used in CLT



are kiln-dried to 12% moisture content which is low enough to preclude mould growth, removing the need for treating or plastic membranes.

Hence, by replacing steel and concrete structures with timber we can create healthy more sustainable places to live.

### Simon Square

Simon Square is situated in the southside of Edinburgh, between the Meadows and Arthur's Seat. Taking its name from a historic square that has been elongated over time, it infills a section of the old town that had been described as 'gritty' by selling agents. Previously the site was home to a single storey builders' yard with a 1880s two storey building wrapping the south and west sides and a 1930s traditional tenement to the north.

Key to unlocking the site was the form the building took: a reaction to the proximity of existing boundaries. Mitigation against overlooking into the adjacent properties required a serrated plan with windows angled away from each other, ensuring canted and chamfered bay windows nestled into the urban grain. Alongside site constraints it was important for the developer-led market that the proposal was commercially viable, getting enough density with a minimum of six flats and the right mix of one and two beds.

CLT was the obvious choice for creating healthy homes - a priority for the developer - but it had to stack up. We tested and costed other options such as masonry and traditional timber kit construction but, due to the serrated form, construction wouldn't be possible without the need for additional steelwork, something everyone was keen to avoid. There were also additional complexities due to the tight site, access and material storage.

While CLT was a little more expensive in material terms, it was understood it would unlock the site and ensure a faster build time. CLT is relatively lightweight so extensive foundations weren't required and, overall, there was less excavation. The panels then arrived on one lorry and took four weeks to erect. With limited internal finishes and lining out required, work progressed quickly.

There were challenges in meeting the building regulations ensuring the CLT could







provide the stringent standards of homes. The sound transference requirements in Scotland are some of the highest in Europe at 56db; at Simon Square we achieved 62db by separating every structural element and fixing with compressive Sylodyn foam provided and developed by Getzner. These fixings are hidden in the floor and ceiling build ups with a standard acoustic batten in the floor and acoustic hangers and plasterboard at the ceiling.

In terms of fire safety, CLT performs surprisingly well as it is thick enough that, if it does catch fire, it will char slowly with an area of heated wood and then unaffected timber behind retaining its structural integrity. The thicker the panel the longer it can withstand fire. Fortunately, due to the structural requirements of the panels at Simon Square they were thick enough to meet the Technical Standards. However, they still needed to be treated for surface spread of flame using an intumescent coating provided by Envirograf.

While there are some small areas of timber partitioning and plasterboard linings, exposing the CLT internally was key to create a healthy environment and as a result the building is quiet, warm and inviting inside.

All the apartments sold before the build-

Fraser/Livingstone Architects received the Timber Award for Simon Square in 2024 Royal Incorporation of Architects in Scotland (RIAS) Awards. This is a special category jointly sponsored by Scottish Forestry and Confor.

ing was finished despite some hesitancy from the agents on the marketability of exposed timber. Briefing notes helped with this process, written to manage the expectations of the buyers and help them understand that CLT is a natural material, and the finished texture would reflect this with some settlement a natural consequence of the behaviour of timber.

Buyers were given the option to white-wash the walls if they didn't like the appearance but happily none opted for this and really like the inherent warmth the wood gives to their spaces.

### Scottish timber

Ideally, we would like to be using Scottish timber for such projects but it's not quite possible in these quantities yet. Therefore, Egoi Wood Group, based in Spain, provided the CLT for Simon Square. They were able to provide timber within a 100km radius of the factory and overall 183m<sup>3</sup> of timber

was used with only 15m<sup>3</sup> of off-cuts, which were then recycled.

C24 timber is the strength grade widely used in frames and the majority of projects rely on this being imported as very little Scottish timber reaches this grade due to its fast growth, a process which leads to an increase in knots.

C16 is a lower strength grade that most Scottish timber does achieve but it is still entirely possible to create timber frames from. While it is considered less durable, and visually less desirable, C16 is less expensive and can be strong enough if carefully selected and should be considered more widely to help bolster mass timber construction in the UK given its availability.

If, as a profession, we're to actually address the pledges we made in 2019 perhaps we should be working collectively to increase the demand for such a sustainable product and viability of its use for a developer-led market.

# APF 2024 THE BEST YET?

Exhibition Secretary **Ian Millward** reflects on another successful APF.

For the most part, the weather gods looked favourably on APF 2024. In the build-up we had generally excellent hot and sunny weather, which resulted in us advising our staff to use suncream and having to spray the tracks with water to damp down the dust.

On the Friday of the show, we nervously tracked a huge thunderstorm passing from west to east which was bringing lightning, downpours and flooding to southern England and we came very close to having to request all the exhibitors to bring down their MEWP's and suspend the pole climbing. Fortunately, it skirted us to the south by just 11 miles.

Saturday saw great show weather of cool temperatures, some sun and gentle breezes.

Our luck ran out on the Sunday and Monday after the show when, like much of central England, we were hit with a storm front that brought several inches of rain in a matter of hours. This made breakdown somewhat of a challenge with lorries unable to leave the temporary tracking on site resulting in some delays and tailbacks. Mat Box, our Assistant Chief Co-ordinator, did a fantastic job under very challenging and stressful conditions to clear the site within our deadline (except for a solitary excavator). Thank you to all our exhibitors for their patience and support.

Back to the show itself. The site looked fantastic packed with machinery of every size shape and colour. At least £100 million of kit! Of our 1,800m demo >>

Photo credit: Forestry Journal









>> circuit only 20m of it was unsold pre-show. Advance ticket sales and camping had been excellent. Through all three days of the show there was a tangible buzz of excitement and a very friendly atmosphere.

From talking to visitors and exhibitors at the show and feedback afterwards, including social media, the show was a huge critical success. Machines were sold, deals done, old friends greeted, and visitors watched and tried out the largest range of events, competitions, have-a-go opportunities and displays we have ever put on. 800 schoolchildren and 50 teachers thoroughly enjoyed their guided tours. Special thanks must go to the Royal Forestry Society's Outreach and Learning Team for organising the school visits on our behalf.

The show was a wonderful celebration and showcase for the forestry, woodland, arboriculture, trees and timber industries.

I would like to thank all our sponsors, A W Jenkinson, Coombes Forestry, Euroforest, Forestry Commission, Forestry Journal, Husqvarna, McVeigh Parker, Pfanner, Rainbow Professional, Richard Court Forestry Engineering, SOVO2, Teufelberger and Tilhill for their ongoing support. To put on a show of the size and scale of the APF Demo is very expensive. Without their sponsorship the show would be a shadow of what it is. We never take their support for granted and our thanks go to them for helping make the event what it is.

The APF Team who come together every couple of years to run the event once again excelled themselves. Many people, especially the exhibitors, commented on how friendly and relaxed the event was and how helpful our staff were. We had some new faces this year along with the old hands and they blended in seamlessly. The APF Team are what puts the show on, keeps it running and then takes it all to bits afterwards. A great job was done, and I salute you all.

The APF Demo Committee were a little unsure about what visitor numbers would be like after the post-Covid bounce of 2022. I am delighted to report that exhibitor and visitor numbers matched APF 2022. I had nearly a dozen companies pop into APF HQ during the show and ask for details to be sent to them



All photos courtesy of Forestry Journal Except right



about exhibiting at APF 2026. They had visited to assess the event and decided it was the show to be at, so we appear to be well placed as we look forward.

The Demo committee has a debrief meeting in November to review APF 2024 and see how we can improve next time. That is followed by a meeting in February as we start our planning for APF 2026. No rest for the wicked as they say!

I hope you all enjoyed your visit. If anyone has any constructive comments, please let us know. We do listen to all feedback.

APF 2026 will be back on the same site at Ragley on 24-26 September 2026. It will be our Golden Anniversary; 50 years of the APF Demo since our first event in 1976 at Longleat. That is something to look forward to and celebrate. Mark your calendars now.

Was APF 2024 the best yet? This was my 30th year of being Exhibition Secretary and I think on all levels it was. A credit to all the APF Team involved. Roll on APF 2026.



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# FROM THE FOREST WORKERS ZONE

## FISA & FCA Share Skills Talks

Forest Industries Safety Accord (FISA) and Forestry Contracting Association (FCA) shared a platform in the APF's Forest Worker Zone (FWZ) to discuss forestry skills. Along with the Forestry Commission (FC) and Landworkers Alliance (LWA), organisations spanning the range of workers' concerns spoke to each other about how to support training.

The Forest Worker Zone gathers those who are as interested in the people as the products of forestry. Two days of Skills Talks invited key organisations to consider training in Forestry, opening with a discussion panel followed by questions from the audience.

Thursday's session opened with Steve Fowkes (FC, Sector Skills) reminding visitors that, with the industry under contract to put 260,000 ha of new woodland in the landscape by 2050, "we don't have enough people to do the work we need done now. There are many dedicated and hard-working people in the sector, and we need more of them".

Steve's role is to "access funding, bring people round the table, to make sure that all the appropriate people are part of the conversation" and acknowledged the co-operation of the Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education (IfATE) who channel government training funds to industry.

To that end, FC and APF support the Forest Worker Zone which this year brought together FISA, FCA, LWA, MWMAC, Focus on Forestry First, Small Woods (SWA), National Coppice Federation (NCFed) and Cloud Forest to discuss forestry skills.

Neil McKay reminded the room that FISA emerged out of the HSE's call to remedy the forestry industry's "terrible record" and that "the more skilled our workforce

is, the less likely to have accidents and incidents". We're pleased to see increasing mechanisation in forestry, with potential to shield workers from the perils of hand-cutting, though it needs to be set up and operated correctly to avoid creating more hazards in the workplace.

This year FISA have set up a sub-group to the FISA FWM Working Group, which will engage with trainers and training providers to notify and consult on new FISA guidance and safety information.

FCA's Nick Adams laid out the difficulties for employers finding workers with the correct skills, given the job can be so varied. Improving support to businesses and workforce with better competency frameworks could draw workers into the industry from neighbouring sectors. Nick voiced the dilemma for many contractors that late confirmation of contracts is no friend to any, and that those who invest in training need confidence in work ahead to keep trained staff in place.

FCA has partnered with Spot on Safety to offer a package of support to all members, covering a whole range of compliance measures common to smaller operators, that would otherwise need individual attention.

Karina Ponton voiced the view from the Landworkers Alliance, whose Blaze group fosters young people's development in land-based trades with skills sharing and forestry taster days. Karina described the challenges of entrants to forestry facing high competition for the few funded apprenticeships, unsure where to find openings, or how to choose between providers offering very similar content at very different prices. Karina wondered whether a single list of training opportunities might make access easier and invited more landowners and managers to reach out to invite workers to acquire skills.

Highlighting challenges and opportunities ahead, Steve Fowkes reminded the talks of FC's Level 6 >>







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Steve also reminded the talks of FC's support to a national coppice apprenticeship scheme, gathering NCFed, SWA and the Bill Hogarth Memorial Apprenticeship Trust.

NCFed has launched posters explaining coppice works in collaboration with SWA. Host and organiser of the Forest Worker Zone, Toby Allen, had also commissioned a general forestry works in progress poster, issued free to those completing a Forestry, Trees and Woodland Skills Survey, supported by the Skills Sub-Group of the Forestry Skills Forum.

Having absorbed the discussions in the Zone he has managed for 10 years, Toby offered insight into solving some current skills challenges: "It's individual businesses that are finding ways of bringing people in and training them. It would be helpful if the same funds that were channelled into the industry through the recent FAT funds were offered to develop skills in businesses employing others".

*Contributed by Tim Cumine, Sticks Unlimited and NCFed, who chaired the FWZ discussions.*

## IN THE FISA TENT

APF 24 Show discussions centred in the main around FISA 608 Tree Shear and Grapple Saw. There were questions and confusion from stand visitors about required protection for the base machine, risk zones, and when there is a chainshot risk.

FISA is keen to support better understanding for this equipment as part of the push for greater mechanisation in forestry. Increasing mechanisation has the potential to better shield workers from the perils of hand-cutting, vital when working with diseased ash.

At the show, FISA released new guidance: FISA 808 CDM in Relation to Forestry. The guide will be in a feedback period for the coming 18-months.

The CDM Regulations came into force more than 25 years ago, primarily to protect the health and safety of those working in the construction sector. CDM Regula-

tions are applicable to 'construction work' regardless of where it is carried out. FISA guidance offers clear picture examples of when CDM Regs are applicable in forestry, and example template forms to complete.

Questions continue on skills and skill development. FISA will run a comms group online twice a year as part of the FWM Working Group to keep trainers and the training world informed of new and pending guidance. Those who signed up at the APF will be added to the meeting invite.

Our thanks to our supporters of the FISA 24 stand - Manitou and Stihl. Thanks to our Working Group volunteers who gave their time to support the FISA tent and WG gathering.

*More information on FISA 808 available on p55.*



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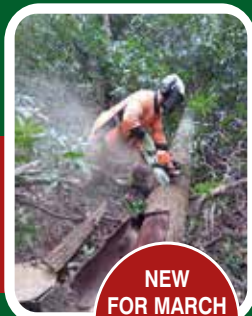
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# TALKING TIMBER AND FUTURE FORESTRY

Confor Communications Manager  
**Eleanor O'Neill** summarises the industry insights  
shared in the Seminar Tent at APF 2024.

**D**espite the sun shining on Ragley Estate, many exhibitors and visitors alike found themselves under the shelter of the APF Seminar tent, hosted by Confor and kindly sponsored by Forestry Commission and Forest Research.

Managing woodlands to produce quality timber was the focus of conversation on Thursday, with topics ranging from tree breeding to pest control. The first of these talks was delivered by Alastair Boston, Forestry Commission Deer Officer, who covered the various methodologies to protect productive woodlands from mammal destruction.

Though several solutions including tree shelters, fencing and enclosure plots all have their benefits and some funding options exist, the scope of mitigating the damage from deer, squirrels, hares and even sheep calls for a holistic approach.

"Deer are not just a woodland issue, they're a landscape issue. Stalkers alone don't have the time, the opportunities, or the funding to do what they need to do," Alastair explained. "And when we do get on top of the deer, the threat becomes grey squirrels. This year has been the worst in

England for squirrel damage."

Growing trees for timber within agroforestry systems was also discussed, with Jim O'Neill, Agroforestry Development Manager for Forestry Commission, reiterating the need for situational management.

"There is a wide spectrum in agroforestry creation, from grazing-friendly shelter belts to coppicing," he said. "As foresters we must be mindful of farmer and landowner objectives and respect requirements. The ethos is to benefit the farming system. I believe there is a massive opportunity for

the forestry industry to assist the farming industry in producing good timber."

Later in the day, Maelor Forest Nurseries' Ben Goh represented the Conifer Breeding Co-operative to explain the work being done to improve the quality of British timber in the future. He said: "Tree improvement is a very rewarding and complex subject; it's worth understanding because it is one of the easiest ways to add value to the future of forestry."

We also heard an update on the National Wood Strategy for England from the English Forest Industries Leadership Group, amidst some concerns in the sector that the recent change in government may stall the momentum on progress towards the strategic goals outlined in the report, not to mention other key projects like the Timber in Construction Roadmap.

Tom Barnes, Managing Director of Vastern Timber and co-author of the Strategy was optimistic but stressed the need for collaborative thinking.

"We need to wrestle back some of the control and get industry-wide, cross-party buy-in for these strategies and initiatives," he said. "That way, there's less inclination to upend the apple cart with every change of power. I think it's possible, and I think there's a lot of willingness to do that."

&gt;&gt;





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# LINKING THE WOOD-CHAIN WITH COLLABORATION AND TECHNOLOGY

**Rosanna Curtis**, Project Manager for the Northwoods Innovation Programme, led a panel alongside Sylva Foundation and Cloud Forest in the APF 2024 Seminar Tent.

>> Encouragingly, a similar sentiment was shared by Ian Tubby, Head of Policy and Advice at the Forestry Commission, who took questions from Confor members as part of the organisation's AGM. He stated: "We need to build on the work we've already done, rather than rehashing the same debates and discussions over again."

Forestry Commission have expressed a desire to increase conifer planting in England to at least 30% of the total, which is hoped to go some way in reliably increasing the timber supply resource.

Friday shifted topics towards industry standards and innovations to secure the future of forestry. The day started with a panel chaired by Rosanna Curtis, Senior Consultant at Reheat and Project Manager for the Northwoods Innovation Programme, which provides access to funding and expertise to support the growth and development of the forestry sector.

A 'lunch and learn' session headed by Daniel Iddon, Woodland Grow, and sponsored by Green-tech furthered the innovation conversation with an update on research into 'living soil' and its applications for forestry.

"When you look at soil under a microscope, it is absolutely teeming with life," said Daniel. "The question is how we work with that life for commercial purposes."

Commercial implications of innovative solutions was also a focus for Pierre Talpe, Director of Rainbow Professional, who went into detail on the impact of different materials used in planting. He pointed out that, while recycling tree shelters is a sensible, cost-effective route for businesses to mitigate the potential harm of plastics in forestry, there are still long-term logistic and environmental concerns.

"If you factor in that in 20 years' time you will need to employ people to remove the plastic, that there's a paperwork need to embed that in management plans, and you will need people to sort out the logistics, the hidden costs mean biodegradable products have lower lifetime costs."

Confor would like to thank all speakers who took the time to engage audiences in the Seminar tent, and the sponsors who made our hosting possible.

**A**PF 2024 marked two years since the launch of the Northwoods Innovation Programme funded under Forestry Commission's Woods into Management Forestry Innovation Fund (WiMFIF). The fund was developed to support ideas and tools to overcome challenges associated with managing unmanaged woodlands of which 50% of private woodlands are.

Bringing into management just 15% of these could release an income of over £1m into forestry and rural economies whilst also improving the environmental and social impacts of trees and woodlands.

The Northwoods Programme, in collaboration with the Sylva Foundation and Cloud Forest, have targeted several challenges by linking the wood-chain via traditional methods – collaboration – and technological developments. These measures challenge several management barriers at once; leveraging funding for woodland management activities, improving woodland owner and manager confidence and knowledge of pathways to manage woodlands and engage appropriate forestry services, and reducing time requirements on landowners and managers.

## Impact of collaboration

The team delivering the programme have, over two years, delivered 23 events, each focused on a topic associated with woodland management, providing insight and demonstrating tools to help different individuals manage woodlands. Northwoods has collaborated with over 50 different organisations and individuals to date to showcase different methods and considerations when managing woods.

The events attract a large range of attendees, connecting woodland owners with the forestry services, linking those along the wood chain by sharing experiences and expertise and networking. This knowledge exchange is key to overcoming one of the main challenges associated with bringing unmanaged woodlands back into management, woodland owner and manager knowledge and confidence of man-

agement pathways.

Two thirds of attendees state they will do something differently in the management of woodlands using the information provided at our events.

## Linking the woodchain with an online timber marketplace

Supported by WiMFIF, CloudForest is developing their timber marketplace to build stronger connections between the dedicated forestry and timber organisations who look after our woodlands.

CloudForest spent last year interviewing people along the timber supply chain, from forest owners right through to those working in construction, to further understand the challenges the sector is facing and how digital tools might be able to help them. They found individuals and businesses struggling to find the information they needed to plan in both the short and longer term. As a result, timber is being wasted.

Both sawmills and harvesting contractors would like a visible pipeline of timber parcels, but the reality is that timber parcels are like buses; you wait an age, and then three come at once. In response, CloudForest has developed two key features that can help overcome these information gaps.

**1. Timber alerts** – Sawmills and others looking for logs or standing trees can save a search and receive timber alerts straight to their inbox when something matching their requirements is listed on the marketplace.

**2. Planned timber parcels** – woodland managers can list timber parcels with planned operation dates. This enables woodland managers to gauge people's interest and start to find good homes for all their trees.

With the end of the Woods into Management funds in sight, Northwoods are exploring different pathways to maintain the programmes traditional and technological pathways to continue our demonstrable impact on woodland management.

Collaborating with each other improves the quality and applicability of tools making them most useful but also connects the entire woodchain, improving the quantity and



quality of woodlands in management which in turn improves the environmental benefits, products and resilience of our woods. How can you collaborate with those around you to meet your own objectives as well as those of the sector?

*One place to start is to sign up to myForest ([myforest.sylva.org.uk](http://myforest.sylva.org.uk)), CloudForest ([www.cloudforest.market](http://www.cloudforest.market)), and Northwoods ([www.northwoods.org.uk](http://www.northwoods.org.uk)).*



## FORGING MANAGEMENT TOOLS

More than just the mapping of woodlands, myForest is an integrated digital system that allows owners and managers to store data, create management plans and other bespoke reports as well as being able to generate high quality output maps. Currently myForest is the UK's most used woodland mapping and management tool with over 215,000ha of woodland managed through it, equating to 9% of privately owned woodland area.

Over the last two years, Sylva Foundation have developed and published additional tools to improve the capabilities of myForest, their mapping platform and flagship project. These tools have been developed in collaboration with a wide range of partners and WiMFIF projects.

Through the Northwoods Innovation Programme, myForest has launched new capabilities through interactive mapping and developed an updated inventory tool. myForest Inventory tool allows users to calculate their inventory from collected plot data, storing it in an accessible format that can easily be kept up to date and linked with other management tools and forms. myForest Inventory was tested with Foresters and non-expert woodland owners

via online and in person events organised by Northwoods to improve the user experience.

Over the next six months, Sylva Foundation are developing and finalising standardised sales brochures which can be produced in myForest. The function will guide owners and managers through a set of questions to provide a comprehensive, standardised sales brochure, improving the quality of information available, de-risk the sale and improve confidence of those in the sales chain.

They are also exploring a connection between myForest and Cloud Forest to help users complete the sales transaction.

*Paul Orsi MRICS MICFor, Director of Operations, Sylva Foundation*

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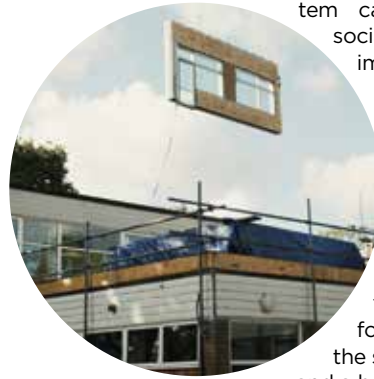
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# NATURAL RESOURCE MEETS DIGITAL DESIGN



ings for the residential, education, health-care, leisure, office and industrial sectors.

"I founded Ecosystems Technologies with the intent to be able to add value to the homegrown timber resource," explained Matt Stevenson. "We aim to transform the industry through adopting a digital approach to design and manufacture, and through demonstrating that a homegrown, mass timber-based construction system can deliver meaningful social and environmental impact."

Ecosystems Technologies is still a young company but has grown rapidly with Matt at the helm. He started this venture off the back of a career in sustainable sectors, having previously founded early pioneer in the space, Carbon Dynamic, and a background in sculpture.

"Business started properly trading in early 2021, following 12 months working in close collaboration with Edinburgh Napier University and the Built Environment Smart Transformation (BE-ST) team to demonstrate the viability of using homegrown timber in mass timber products," he stated.

"The nature of a start-up, even one transitioning to a scale-up business, means that my day-to-day tasks can be really pretty varied. That can be at the innovation and technical development side of things, which plays an important part and where I can add some quite unique value within the business."

Ecosystems Technologies has set out to disrupt the construction industry by unlocking the full potential of engineered timber. Founder and Director Matt Stevenson talked to **Eleanor O'Neill** about scaling up and building better.

**H**uddled in the picturesque surroundings of the Cambo Estate in St Andrews, two unique timber structures stand out of the tree-line. These are off-grid cabins, manufactured from Scottish timber in Invergordon and transported to site as fully realised volu-

metric units.

And the potential of this approach is not limited to remote holiday homes.

Ecosystems Technologies, the company commissioned to conceptualise and construct the cabins, design, manufacture and install high-quality, versatile, modular build-







That involvement at every stage pays off in customer relations and the tailored solutions Ecosystems Technologies can offer to their clientele. They provide accessible design tools and early visualization to ensure building needs are met and enable systems for ongoing performance monitoring after installation.

Matt continued: "We're fortunate in that all of our opportunities are organic; it's people coming to us, looking for what we do, rather than us having to go out to market looking for work. It's all self-directed, which is great."

"We see our client base as partners who we are supporting on their decarbonisation journeys. We typically go from delivering early prototype and proof of concept projects for them, through to the full-scale roll out of solutions across their estates. That client relationship piece is fundamental."

Partnering with housing authorities, non-profits, schools, utilities providers and commercial companies, and delivering new

build and retrofit solutions, has given Ecosystems Technologies a broad portfolio of work, though, as Matt pointed out, all underpinned by the same values of sustainable, efficient, and quality construction.

"I think, quite simply, we do have the right product at the right time," he said. "We have developed a homegrown mass timber-based product that is net zero. That's very attractive for a client base who are looking to decarbonise, and from the point of view of materials being a locally sourced. A biophilic end product is attractive and aspirational for a lot of people."

"There is a distinct and increasing demand for that type of product and solution. There have been plenty of times in the past where we've had to be trying to push a sustainable, environmentally positive product into the market but, excitingly, in the last couple of year, it's very much felt like there's been a pivot."

*continued on p46*







partnership with charity and social business Social Bite. Located in South Lanarkshire and Dundee, these communities will provide a supportive living environment for people affected by homelessness.

An existing village in Granton, which has housed around 100 residents since 2018, will also be relocated and updated as part of the project.

Additionally, Ecosystems Technologies have been working with utilities disruptor Ross-Shire Engineering (RSE) to develop the Timber Modular Build solution (TMB), an alternative manufacturing approach for critical national infrastructure units that have historically been constructed with carbon intense materials.

Scottish Water have been early adopters of the TMB water dosing kiosk product, replacing the current unsightly glass-reinforced plastic structures that act as water treatment sites all over Scotland. The mass timber-based alternative has just secured the required security rating certification to be installed on projects all across the UK.

"We're fortunate in that every project that we're delivering is, in its own right, an exciting opportunity to help support that paradigm shift we're trying to bring about," said Matt.

"We've doubled our capacity from 2023 to 2024, and our expectation is to double that again going into 2025, continuing the really exciting ramp up for the business.

*continued from p45*

"We're reaching a point where the market could have an insatiable appetite for that type of solution and, in response to that, what we're trying to develop is a system-based solution that supports our ability to scale at pace."

All the wood used in manufacture is sourced via James Jones from North East Scotland and is put to use through a blended approach of engineered products. Ecosystems Technologies is the UK's first manufacturer of homegrown Cross-Laminated, Glued Laminated and Nail Laminated Timber.

"I do still get reasonably involved on the factory floor. I suppose I'm the custodian of quality in terms of that manufacturing piece - I try to inform how we can most efficiently and effectively produce the products that we do. And I am quite active on-site when it comes to installation.

"That helps to create a sort of feedback loop in terms of the evolution of our offering and processes.

"Efficiency and replicability are at our subcomponent level so that, no matter what client comes through the door, no matter the scale or type of project, we know our build system and library of components can be tailored to deliver against that."

One of those clients is the Department



of Education, now in the third phase of implementing the Gen Zero Schools Build System, a zero-carbon timber-based parts kit intended to deliver full-scale school building projects.

A prototype of the kit's capabilities, demonstrating a multipurpose school hall, was shown at COP 26 and Ecosystems Technologies are now working on delivering annexes to three schools across the country before the end of the year.

Manufacture is also about to commence on two new full-scale villages, each comprising of 10-20 accommodation units and communal hub buildings, constructed in

Through our close collaboration with BE-ST we will be scaling up our manufacture of homegrown mass timber, so the next phase is to go from what is essentially a pilot line approach to full commercialisation.

"The more projects that we can deliver, the more impact we can create. As we scale, we create exciting job opportunities involving skills development and continued collaboration with our academic partners like Edinburgh Napier. Building upon the relationships that we have with BE-ST, Napier and our aligned client base, we can really deliver significant disruption and impact into the marketplace."



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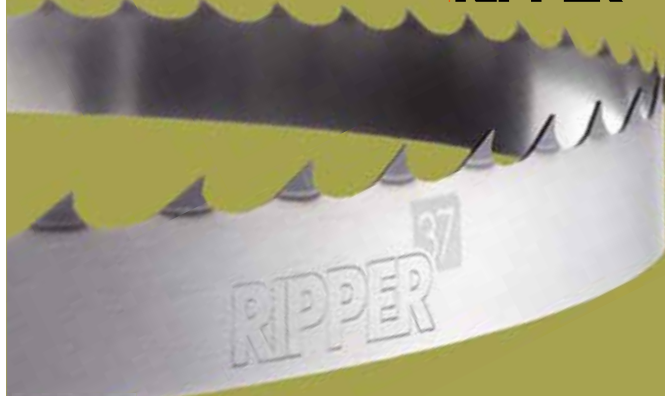
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## FOREST MARKET REPORT

# Investment in carbon and BNG credits still characterised by caution



**Simon Hart**, John Clegg & Co's Head of Forestry in Scotland, and **Hugh Williams**, Forestry Sales Agent in England and Wales, comment on the forestry market.

**W**e are seeing increasing numbers of commercial woods coming to the market, and a steady stream of transactions. Prices are below their Covid peak, and buyers remain generally cautious. More woods with carbon credits are available and here buyers are notably apprehensive in this nascent market.

### Scotland

We are entering an interesting phase in the market north of the border with a rapidly increasing supply of commercial woodlands. Transactions are certainly happening, but at prices clearly down from the 2022 'Covid spike' which was underpinned by low interest rates and very high timber prices.

Recent properties sold or under offer include Dunter Law, 90ha of young spruce in Berwickshire sold at c. £15,000/stocked hectare; Carcarse in Dumfriesshire, south Scotland 260ha of spruce dominated, average 17-year-old stands guided at c.£20,000/ha; Gleann Mor, Argyll, 235ha including some steep

ground, guided at c. £10,000/ha for average age 17 spruce, including areas to be restocked.

The large Glen Shira woodland guided at £29 million eventually found a buyer. This 2,000ha Argyll spruce woodland with an average age of 21 was guided at c. £19,000/stocked ha and sold around the guide.

We are starting to see a few woods coming to the market with carbon credits as part of the package. It is early to say how this market will develop, but investors are clearly cautious. The Woodland Carbon Code methodology facilitates calculations of future carbon credits, but how much will that carbon be worth? Some contracts run for 100 years, and it is a brave investor prepared to speculate on the price of a relatively new commodity over that time span.

Most noteworthy is Far Ralia in the Cairngorm National Park, bought four years ago as bare land by a Fund and now back on the market with most tree planting completed (all native). This is rewilding on a huge scale with a total property area of nearly 1,500ha and over

half planted/plantable. It comes with c. 350,000 tonnes of carbon credits (mainly woodland, but some peat) and a guide of £12 million. Simplistically that is £35/tonne for carbon, but there is the value of the land and young trees as well.

That division of value is a matter of conjecture, and likely to test us Registered Valuers for many years to come!

Brisbane Farm in Ayrshire is another young native woodland with 55,000 tonnes of carbon credits. This was guided at £2mn for 144ha, c.100 planted. That equates to £36/t carbon. However, it has been withdrawn from the market with the agent reporting limited interest at the price.

The market for bare land suitable for carbon projects is also more muted than 2-3 years ago. Some are talking of a bubble bursting, but that is not my view. To address the climate and biodiversity crises we are going to have to invest hugely in natural capital projects. Governments do not have the cash, so private capital is going to be

*continued on p50*



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*continued from p48*

required. That means markets generating attractive returns will have to be created, or the necessary action will not happen. However, as a new market, there will be some significant volatility in the early years.

New woodlands have come to the market in recent weeks. This includes a 16-property portfolio (15 in Scotland, one in Ireland) likely to be valued at more than £30 million. On the owner's instruction, this is available only as a single lot which is a relatively rare way of selling in the UK market. It will be interesting to see how the sale progresses.

Reres Wood near St Andrews in Fife extends to c.70 ha and is guided at £500,000. This property is dominated by lovely mature pine, which has been well thinned, with potential for CCF. For the first time in my memory, an east coast woodland with its own beach!

On the west coast near Oban is Polvinister, a second rotation young conifer wood with ponds and planning permission for three houses. The 57ha property is guided at £750,000.

## England and Wales

In England and Wales, we are seeing sales of 'micro-woodlands' - less than three acres - slowing down and buyers

are being more cautious on price. We attribute this to factors such as the squeeze on cash due to the costs of living and rising mortgage rates (albeit the latter have settled of late), the widespread availability of smaller woods (and the resale of 'pre-loved' small woods that have been bought, left largely untouched and then re-marketed) and increasing concerns over issues such as ash dieback, owner liability and concerns of undertaking the required works to discharge these responsibilities.

That said, a recent valuation of a 3-acre wood in the New Forest showed that buyers were prepared to pay a high price premium for 'special' woodlands, with values of more than £45,000/acre for small woodland, grassland and stream frontage. The adage of "location, location, location" still stands.

Medium sized woodlands (over 10 acres) are finding buyers, but interest is calmer and therefore sales are taking longer. We are delighted that Pen y Gelli woods near Mold sold above guide (over £300,000) following much interest and competitive bidding. This 70.81-acre wood comprised of beech and conifer remnants, on a long leasehold. It needs a thorough thinning programme. The buyer, a well-known timber supplier, has bought a woodland that will give them ample and continued supplies of beech

for the firewood market and - if carefully selected - some excellent timber suitable for higher value outlets.

We do see the beginnings of larger woodlands coming to the market, but while saving rates remain attractive this may continue to be a gentle, not a sudden, reawakening. Some younger woodlands are coming to the market with the added value of "carbon payments" and/or "natural capital potential". The former can result in interesting premium prices, and we note from experience that the management regime that has been entered into the carbon calculations, such as those with prescriptions of "no thin", can lead to contractual and legal uncertainty on ownership, an inability to change prescriptions and contractual liabilities of up to 100 years.

Natural capital opportunities do exist for established woodlands, but they are significantly less than for other land uses, such as grassland, as the latter offers greater potential for Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) Credits (and payments) and other natural capital opportunities. For natural capital, BNG and carbon, it is very important to understand the long-term implications of entering into agreements or buying land with existing agreements.

As ever, prudent investors are urged to take competent professional advice in all aspects of property transactions.







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# The Land Reform Bill: Key considerations for forest owners



**Graeme Leith**, partner in rural business and natural capital at Brodies LLP, looks at how Part 1 of the Land Reform (Scotland) Bill will impact forest land owners.

In March 2024, the Scottish Parliament proposed significant changes to the Scottish rural landscape with publication of the Land Reform (Scotland) Bill. Part 1 of the Bill introduces obligations on owners of landholdings over 3,000 hectares – large landholdings – to create and comply with land management plans, while placing significant restrictions on the sale of all or part of a landholding that is greater than 1,000 hectares – a large holding of land.

These changes are designed to provide communities with greater agency for use of rural land and to increase opportunities to acquire land for community benefit.

Notably, the Part 1 provisions, as they currently stand, apply equally to all land and property types in Scotland – including forestry. The ins and outs of the Bill are too extensive in detail to be covered in full here, so these are just some of the highlights.

## WHICH TYPES OF LAND WILL BE AFFECTED?

Some larger commercial forests in Scotland will be over 1,000 hectares while there are few over 3,000 hectares, so the provisions relating to large holdings of land are likely more relevant. However, the Bill is currently at a stage where provisions may still change – and there have been calls from some stakeholders to lower the area thresholds. This would bring many more forests into the 'large holdings of land' definition.

## HOW WILL THE BILL AFFECT FORESTRY?

If passed, the Bill may impact forests in three ways: notification of intention to transfer, land management plans, and lotting decisions.

### 1. Notification of Intention to Transfer

Where a forest is a large holding of land, landowners will be prohibited from transferring ownership of the forest or any part of the forest unless consent is given by Scottish ministers.

For a landowner to obtain consent, they must notify the Scottish ministers of their intention to transfer. This information will be made public to enable community bodies to register their interest in purchasing the land. If a community body registers an interest and is successful, they will be granted first opportunity to buy the land. If no interest is registered, the



landowner will be allowed to proceed with the transfer of land.

### 2. Land Management Plans

For larger forests that comprise large landholdings or those extending to 1,000 hectares or more and comprising more than 25% of an inhabited island, landowners will have to prepare a publicly-available land management plan. These plans may have to include ownership structure details, and the owner's long-term vision, or objectives, including details of any potential sales or option agreements. Landowners should be aware that failure to comply with this obligation may incur a fine of up to £5,000.

### 3. Lotting Decisions

Prior to the transfer of a forest that is a large holding of land, Scottish ministers may make a lotting decision to split the landholding into smaller lots for marketing and selling purposes. Ministers would only be entitled to do so where it would be more likely to make the community more sustainable than if all of the forest were transferred to one person.

Landowners will be prohibited from transferring the forest until the lotting decision has been finalised, so forest owners should be aware that lotting decisions may cause delays in the transfer or sale process. It is too early to say whether Scottish ministers will determine

that lotting or commercial forests for such reasons is appropriate, but the Bill suggests that each proposed sale will have to be assessed on its own terms, rather than there being a blanket policy.

While aspects of the Bill are still being examined by the Scottish Parliament, there are various provisions that are likely to result in significant publicity requirements, delays or limitations in the transfer or sale of land.

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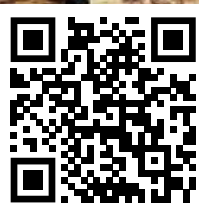


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# CDM IN RELATION TO FORESTRY

With the launch at APF 2024 of FISA 808, **Gillian Clark** explains how Construction Design & Management regulations impact forestry work.

Complying with Construction Design & Management (CDM) Regulations does not need to be an onerous task and should be proportionate to the risk and size of the construction projects, bearing in mind the bigger picture of getting the planning and co-ordination right.

Most of the information, if not all, is covered in current forestry health and safety site documentation. Recently published FISA 808 CDM in Relation to Forestry gives a clear outline of when CDM is required and what is required along with example templates to fill in.

The CDM Regulations came into force more than 25 years ago, primarily to protect the health and safety of those working in the construction sector. CDM Regulations are applicable to 'construction work' regardless of where it is carried out; so yes, they also apply to construction works undertaken during forestry.

Application of the CDM Regulations is not at all well understood, with many questions and confusion around how/when they apply and whether forestry construction works fall within the requirements.

FISA 808 CDM in Relation to Forestry enters circulation with an 18-month feedback period. During this feedback period, supporting questions and queries received will be answered regularly through the FISA e-update. A Technical Note on CDM with practical worked examples will also soon be issued. The Technical Note will outline steps for those simple/short steps in forestry construction like forest road repair.

In 808 guidance, clear picture examples of when CDM Regs are applicable in forestry, along with the example template forms.

The guide is free to download on the FISA website. QR codes in the guide link to the example forms to download.

When forestry works are undertaken as part of the construction works on a wind farm site, the forestry harvesting works would likely be as a sub-contractor/contractor on the wind farm site; the main wind farm construction Principal Contractor fulfilling the requirements of the CDM Regulations.

If the forestry harvesting works begin prior to any construction elements/construction works being on site, then CDM would not apply for non-construction works (forestry harvesting is not construction).

In certain circumstances, larger forestry construction projects must be notified to the Health and Safety Executive by the Client (or their representatives) prior to the



**Some of the picture outlines from the Guide in FISA 808 Annex1 Examples of Construction Type Works Being Undertaken in Forestry**

commencement of the construction phase. A construction project is notifiable if the construction work is expected to "last longer than 30 working days and have more than 20 workers working at the same time at any point on the project or exceed 500 person days".

Even if a project does not meet the threshold for notification to HSE, the rest of the CDM regulations will still apply. Every day where there is construction work planned should be counted when consid-

ering these thresholds. This includes where the work planned on that day is of a short duration. It also includes holidays and weekends.

If a project looks like it could be notifiable at the outset as the construction phase is about to get underway, clients should treat it as a notifiable project. Equally, if a project does not meet the notification criteria initially, but subsequently becomes notifiable, the client should submit a notification. It is the Client's duty to amend the notification where necessary to ensure it remains accurate and up to date.

Projects should be notified to HSE using the online form at <https://form.hse.gov.uk/f10>.

Our thanks go to the FISA Worksite Working Group volunteers for helping the industry with clear outlines on this topic - not an easy task!



# FOREST TO FRONT DOOR PHILOSOPHY

How Highland Heritage Woodworks is ensuring better outcomes for sustainable Scottish timber.

In an era where sustainability and local sourcing are critical, the UK timber industry faces significant challenges and opportunities. Highland Heritage Woodworks (HHW), founded by business partners Guy Phillips and Armands Balams, stands as an example of how vertical integration and a solid commitment to sustainable practices can lead to better outcomes in small-scale timber production.

This in-depth case study explores how HHW's approach seeks out the best outcomes for Scottish timber and helps ensure its sustainable future.

## Company background and vision

Established three years ago, Highland Heritage Woodworks was born from a unique fusion of Guy's project management, business development and entrepreneurial skills and Armands' extensive master carpentry skills. Now they operate a team of eight.

Their shared vision was clear: to be involved with every step of the timber process, from the trees standing in the wood, to the final customer product, maximising the potential of each log processed, and supporting both the economy and the environment. They saw the need to innovate in how Scottish timber was milled and utilized, pushing beyond traditional methods to extract more value from this natural resource.

Today, HHW combines a cutting-edge sawmill and kilning operation, an enviable master carpentry team and a developing cabin business, combined with a strong R&D focus on developing new products that make the best of our home-grown timber.

## Strategic vertical integration

Central to HHW's success is its strategy of vertical integration. By controlling every stage of the supply chain – from log sourcing to the final milling and processing of the timber – HHW ensures quality control and sustainability throughout. This comprehensive control facilitates several key advantages:

- **Enhanced quality control:** With direct oversight of the entire process, HHW guarantees that the timber produced meets the highest standards, from the forest to the front door.
- **Sustainability focus:** Vertical integration allows HHW to engage in more sustainable harvesting practices, like continuous forestry cover, directly impacting forest conservation efforts and ensuring that each piece of wood is responsibly sourced.
- **Transparency and traceability:** With direct line of sight across the value chain HHW is able to assure its customers of the provenance of their timber, even providing them with the opportunity to see their selected trees being felled.

## Advanced technologies and investment

Supporting their commitment to quality and sustainability, HHW has invested nearly £600,000 in state-of-the-art sawmilling and kilning facilities. The cornerstone of this investment is a new Mebor wide band sawmill and a 60m<sup>3</sup> timber drying kiln both of which significantly enhance their production capabilities.

The drying process is critical to producing quality timber as it stabilizes the wood,

making it less prone to warping, shrinkage and decay. From this, higher value products like flooring, cladding, posts, beams and structural grade timber are produced.

These exciting new ideas have received support from various forward-thinking organisations including Scottish Enterprise, Grown in Britain, Opportunity Northeast, Business Gateway and Scottish Forestry.

## Product range

Originally the operation focussed on bespoke joinery from a complete love of working with wood and producing beautiful hand-crafted products, but as they expanded new opportunities arose. Guy and the team are a 'can do' outfit ready to adapt to new customer challenges so when the opportunity to work in construction materials arose, they leapt at the chance.

Small beginnings with projects like bespoke wooden greenhouses have expanded into full roof kits and fittings for the restoration of historic buildings. The next big leap was to upgrade the sawmill to produce high quality, sustainable Scottish timber at scale to clients who care deeply about better outcomes for locally sourced timber.

## Innovation in product line: Beòhus sustainable multi-use cabins

Expanding their product range, HHW has recently introduced the Beòhus, a stunning multi-use cabin that redefines traditional wooden structures. Designed for modern living, the hexagonal Beòhus combines sustainability with cutting-edge design, offering:



- Sustainable materials
- Contemporary design
- Energy efficiency
- Customisable features

This innovative product underscores HHW's role as a disruptor in the timber industry, merging traditional materials with modern technology to create environmentally friendly and aesthetically pleasing living spaces.

### Environmental impact and carbon footprint reduction

Furthering their commitment to environmental stewardship, HHW is in the process of installing a biomass plant that will significantly reduce the operation's carbon footprint. By utilizing wood waste to generate energy, the company not only decreases its reliance on fossil fuels but also ensures that every part of the timber is used efficiently. This approach aligns with global sustainability goals and demonstrates HHW's leadership and net-zero ambitions.

### Provenance and certification

Understanding the growing consumer demand for certified, sustainably sourced products, HHW has achieved chain of custody certification from Grown in Britain, FSC and PEFC bodies, confirming the sustainable provenance of their timber. This certification is vital for consumers who prioritize environmental impact and seek reassurance that their purchase contributes to sustainable forestry practices.

### Local impact and future outlook

HHW's growing operations significantly benefit the local economy by providing high-quality, skill-based jobs and reducing reliance on imported timber. Collaborations with local universities and organizations like Scottish Enterprise foster innovation and help educate the next generation of woodworkers and customers alike.

Looking ahead, Highland Heritage Woodworks seeks to play its part in influencing the future of the UK's forestry and timber products market. As demand for sustainable building materials grows, they hope their innovative approach and commitment to quality will set a high standard for others to follow.

The "Forest to Front Door" philosophy not only ensures top-tier products but also advances the broader goals of sustainability and economic growth within Scotland.

### Conclusion

Highland Heritage Woodworks exemplifies how integrating sustainability, advanced wood processing technologies and master craftsmanship can create not only superior timber products but also a robust, environmentally friendly business model that promises a greener and more sustainable future.





**Neil Sutherland**, Founder and Director of innovative manufacture and construction company MAKAR, explores how Scotland is working towards exiting the oil-age and delivering much-needed homes from homegrown timber.



**W**e are currently living through a period of significance for the forestry, timber processing and wood in construction sectors. We are so close to these dynamics it is difficult to fully appreciate our exiting the oil-age and the heralding in of the timber-age.

The Scottish Government has recently announced a housing emergency with many Councils following suit. This measure, the seeming result of panic on the part of a range of interests, has prompted media into almost daily coverage. One such interview began with the assumption that development is inherently bad for the environment, so how could building more homes square with the climate and nature emergency?

In many respects the negative assumption relating to conventional construction is correct. In Europe 40% of global warming emissions are generated directly or indirectly by the built environment. It has been estimated for example that the average UK home contributes 8.1 metric tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> per annum through dependency on gas for space heating and grid electricity.

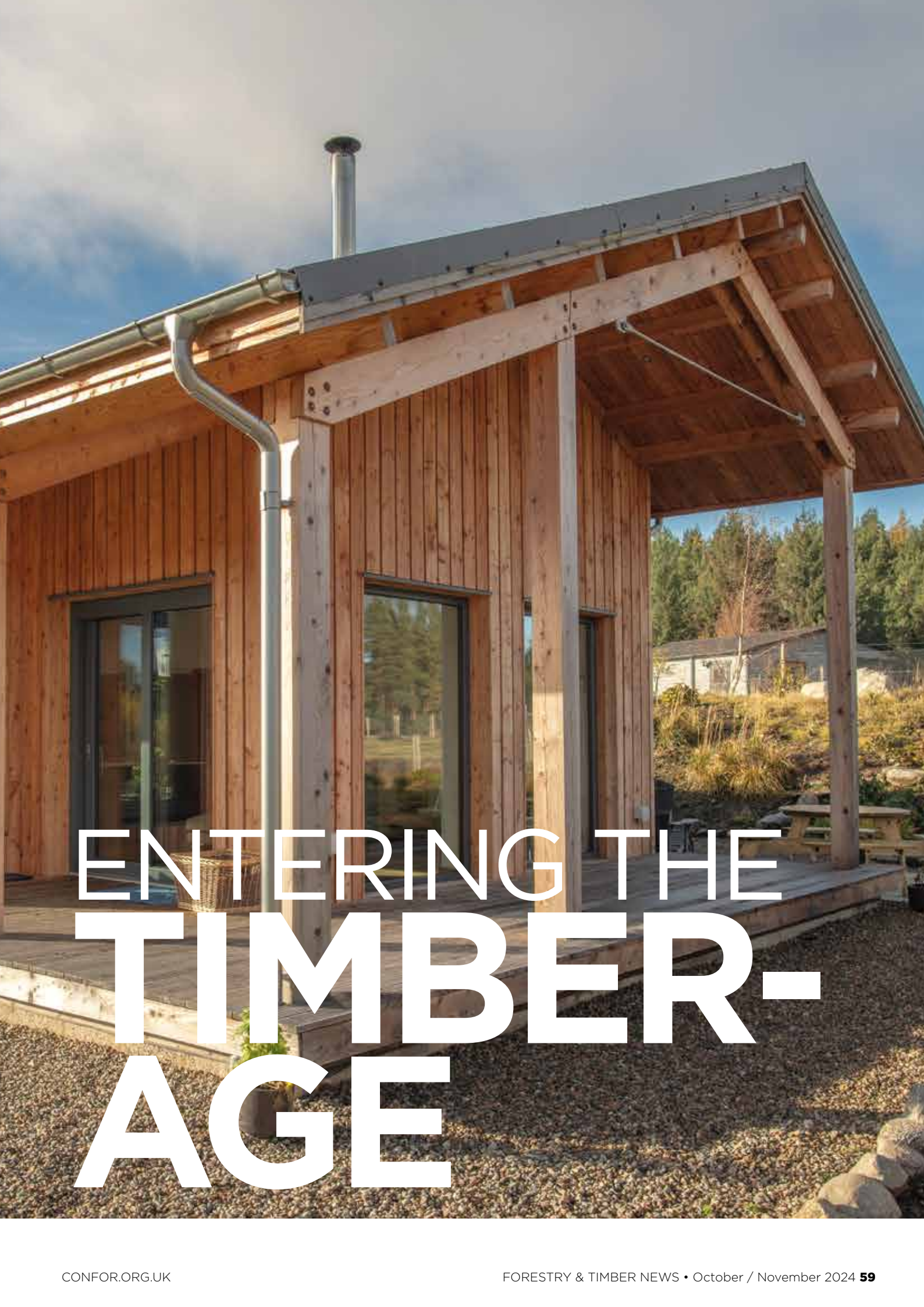
In Scotland, the electricity grid is largely decarbonised due to the combination of hydro and on-shore and off-shore wind generation. Pretty much every time the reduction in GHG emissions is mentioned by MS media, the default assumption and focus turn to power generation.

This is only half of the emissions story. Every average speculative volume-built new house completed in the UK contributes 35 to 50 metric tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> due to its 'up front' emissions relating to the materials employed and their resulting industrial processes. Steel, concrete, synthetic stone and plastics are high embodied carbon materials with resulting emission contributions.

Due to the limited supply chain options in this country, our average run of the mill volume-built housing scheme is full of these materials. Scotland does differ from the other devolved nations in the uptake of timber panel construction. On the face of it this is positive, the structure holding the building up is timber derived instead of concrete block. However, when compared with all the other materials utilised, from PVC windows to concrete roof tiles, the timber portion is disappointingly small. A closer look reveals that due to the C24 grade required for standard roof trusses for example, this timber is generally imported.

We believe media interviewers need to ask a different question: how do we utilise the dire need for new homes and make a tangible contribution to climate & nature action and the economy? We believe >>





# ENTERING THE TIMBER- AGE





>> there is a joined-up solution waiting to happen which will have multiple benefits, making a difference to people's lives and to the planet. It involves a big-plan, a large nature-based timber engineering initiative, transformative by its nature, ripe for Scotland at this time.

We might refer to this as Scotland's Greenhouse Gas Removals Carbon Pump and it works like this: Atmospheric carbon, resulting from fossil-based emissions, is a great resource but stored in the biosphere is a bad idea. We need to capture this carbon, bring it down from the atmosphere by either natural or engineered approaches and do it fast.

Natural options include restoration of peat bogs, increasing soil carbon and afforestation. Engineered solutions include carbon capture and storage, and wood in construction. In viewing these natural and engineering possibilities the cost and likely scale require consideration.

We are clear that linking afforestation with wood in construction is a combined solution entirely suited to Scotland's circumstances, a powerful win-win. We have 2/3 of the UK standing timber resource, together with woodland expansion policy ambition and we desperately need new homes. Timber rich homes, that is homes delivered not only with their structure, but with timber-based insulation, windows, cladding and internal finishes, have been shown to have immediate benefits.

A study MAKAR carried out indicated the relative up-front embodied carbon of a four-person two bed home to be around 26 tonnes, around half that of the average new UK home. Amazingly, such a progressive local timber derived home was able to lock up 38 metric tonnes of sequestered

biogenic carbon; the new home when completed took down 12 tonnes of carbon and stored it.

The full picture of ongoing operational emissions and therefore running costs, are also startling; spread over a year this is around £5 / week, £260 / year of non-fossil derived energy input for comfort.

This was 10 years ago, fast track to MAKAR 2.0 and the launch of a product with known characteristics, our Timber Terrace Homes.

A timeless approach to excellent homes, the terrace is immensely well suited to repetition, an efficient, elegant solution to high quality homes. Universal in its common sense, it possesses many advantages, including organising place and space. Crucially we can reach unparalleled levels of energy performance.

Passivhaus has become the benchmark for a quality assurance approach to homes across Europe. The assessment modelling process offers exacting verification of just how a future home will function. As such it represents a radical departure from the construction sector business as usual, now representing a large part of the problem.

We believe delivering Passivhaus homes consistently and at scale can only be achieved with a radical change in delivery approach. A small but growing Movement, which till now has been offered little support from government, is forging an off-site factory-based path. Ditching the fragmented on-site conventional route, the emerging experience can now demonstrate significant advantages and when fully integrated as a system, can crucially deliver at

affordable housing cost benchmarks.

Conventionally buildings are inefficiently made according to design. Modern Methods of Construction (MMC) Off-site solutions are modelled for manufacture and assembled.

### Contemporary home delivery

MMC solutions are created twice, first as a digital-twin, a model capturing in precise terms exactly how everything will come together. Sub-assembly elements are precision manufactured fitting neatly together in actuality onto foundations coordinated by way of digital satellite positioning. Internal fit-out is a series of installations, all preformed modelled and coordinated, supplied by a range of local businesses.

Words are important, as many in common use have lost their meaning. An appropriate lexicon is emerging for the current Off-site solutions movement:

- Model replacing Design
- Manufacture instead of Build
- Assemble replacing Construction
- Inspiring healthy homes, replacing dreary toxic houses

Due to reduced energy demand a significant amount of that energy would be generated with PV panels on site, reducing national grid infrastructure. Small private gardens would be complimented with generous communal spaces with perennial plantings and productive food growing areas, enhancing occupant health and biodiversity.

So what if Scottish Councils purchased land at pre-development value, funded essential infrastructure - access, water, power, drainage and landscaping, then commissioned best practice timber terrace home solutions with characteristics of energy reduction, local supply chain sourcing, net-zero carbon on delivery and all the result of local green factory industrialisation. Franchised businesses in every town and village across Scotland would be run from local workshops owned in part by public as well as private interests.

This is actually, and perhaps naturally, how many European countries handle their citizens' housing needs, embodying the fast-emerging timber-age.





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# MANAGING DEER ACROSS THE ENGLISH LANDSCAPE

**Ian Millward** represented Confor at 'Managing Deer Across the English Landscape', a sold-out Forestry England headed conference drawing attention from across the forestry and deer industries.

Nearly 300 delegates from a wide range of organisations, associations, forestry companies and private estates gathered at Old Thorns Hotel and Country Club in Hampshire on 1 October for 'Managing Deer Across the English Landscape'.

The event was sold out; a testament to how deer management has pushed to the forefront of planning, managing and establishing woodlands. It is no longer an afterthought, and it was fascinating to see the innovations being made to help us manage deer in the landscape.

Alan Law, Chief Officer for Strategy and Reform at Natural England, made the point that deer were a nationally significant conservation issue. Surveys indicate that 27% of all woodland has suffered deer damage, increasing to 35% in SSSI's. Although difficult to quantify, it was estimated that deer issues were costing about £70 - £270 million.

To deal with this, it is very important to involve the public in wildlife management

and conservation and to update management systems to achieve healthy and plentiful woodland. Deer and the resulting venison should be regarded as a resource to be managed, rather than a pest.

Ben Harrower from BH Wildlife Consultancy gave a very informative update on the latest drone technology available for surveying and interpreting data from deer counts. Where once this was done via very expensive helicopter counts, it can now be carried out much more effectively, accurately and economically with drones weighing as little as 500g and having a 2km range.

Software allows automatic counting of deer and recognises boundaries and deer species. The new technology has shown that deer numbers are actually at a much higher density than previously realised. Repeated surveys have shown an astonishing rate of immigration into new areas. Overall, it is now estimated that there are on average 11.25 deer per km<sup>2</sup> in the UK.

In England, the figure is 14 per km<sup>2</sup> and in Scotland 8.5 km<sup>2</sup>. This equates to

around 1.8 million deer in England and 700k in Scotland. Species breakdown is around 37.6% Fallow, 36.9% Red, 12.5% Roe, 7.1% Muntjac, 3.3% Sika and 2.6% Chinese Water Deer.

In areas surveyed for Forestry & Land Scotland, the results showed that immigration matched cull figures in many areas, meaning the cull was having no effect on overall population. Sika were found to be populating and increasing in numbers in very remote and hard to get to areas where culling was very difficult. Red and Fallow reacted to strong culling pressure by moving territories making further culling harder.

This was a stark warning to what can happen if wildlife and deer numbers are left unchecked.

David Morris, Area Operations Manager for RSPB, gave a talk on managing deer on the RSPB Estate. The RSPB manage 160,000 ha of land and 226 reserves. They only use lead-free ammunition, and control is managed by both in-house and contract stalkers. They publicise their ver-



tebrate control and claim to be the only UK landowner to do this.

David said it was essential to manage communication about control rather than react to criticism. They are running a scheme called 'Hill To Grill' to introduce their members to the need for sustainable management. David said it was essential that the stalkers had the right equipment, particularly for extraction from difficult areas, and to ask for help if needed.

Peter Green, Veterinary Advisor to the British Deer Society, presented an update on Deer and Bovine TB. Key points were that deer rarely show external clinical signs and these might not be evident for up to 7 years after infection, after which the deer go downhill very quickly.

There is no hard evidence they are spreading TB into cattle, unlike badgers, but it is still a possibility. Eradicating TB in a park herd is very difficult without a 100% cull and leaving the land fallow for a year. The most important thing is to minimise spread by avoiding having any communal feeding areas or putting down piles of hay, carrots etc.

Forestry England's James Upson, Wildlife Ranger Manager, and Dr Lucie Jerabkova, Forest Resilience Programme Manager, outlined a research project analysing deer stomach content sampling and the use of eDNA. Essentially analysing stomach contents gave information on what deer were eating and when to help identify vulnerable species when planning forest planting. eDNA gave accurate information on what species were present in a location. This could decide if deer fencing would be required or if deer could be managed by their rangers.

Professor Naomi Sykes gave a very entertaining talk about the history of Fallow deer in the UK. She said that in the 1970s there were about 450k deer in the UK, but this has spiralled to nearly 2 million. Frequent claims are made that the deer population is the highest it has ever been in 1,000 years but this is based on unreliable evidence.

Eating venison was very much a com-

munity thing in the Middle Ages with clear evidence about what part of the deer each section of the community ate, from the elite eating the haunches to the peasants eating the umbles. Naomi noted procurement regulations for purchasing game needed to be changed if venison was to widely feature in schools, hospitals etc.

David Hooton, Forestry Commission, gave a brief update on the British Quality Wild Venison Standard. Key points are to supply high quality venison into the food chain to an agreed standard and with full traceability. Concerns were voiced about the cost of stalkers signing up to this and how ongoing audits and costs could spiral and that it could create a monopoly with which smaller Game Dealers could not compete.

In the afternoon session, Becks Spake from the University of Reading gave a talk on iDeer, an app for Strategic Woodland Creation. Simply put, this uses input of site type, size and species to determine risk of damage and protection requirements. At the risk of being accused of being a dinosaur, this struck me as something any competent forester or land manager does anyway – however, the app is still in development and should not be pre-judged at this stage.

To follow was a talk much of the audience were looking forward to – 'Wolves, can they help control deer numbers?' Presented by Robin Rigg, Carnivore Damage Prevention News and Richard Morley from The Wolves and Humans Foundation.

Case studies were presented from the re-introduction of wolves into Yellowstone National Park and monitoring wolf populations in Slovakia. One wolf eats the equivalent of between 12-40 deer each a year. The speakers suggested a viable population of wolves in the UK could be about 125. This would equate with killing 1,500 deer at the lower end.

Often voiced concerns of wolves taking easy prey such as sheep and other domestic animals over deer were not disputed. The summary was that only Scotland had the land area suitable for introduction and

that wolves could help with deer control.

Rodney Calvert, Natural England, ran through the current regulations for deer control in England and Scotland. There was nothing much new here except to point out that night vision and thermal imaging were permitted under licence in Scotland and that Red Stags now had no close season in Scotland. In England night shooting is being carried out under licence especially to deal with high Fallow populations in areas such as South Downs National Park.

To finish, Doug Knox, Head of Technical Services Group, Forestry & Land Scotland, gave a talk on their recent developments in deer management policy, practice and technology. FLS were embracing the new drone technology for establishing populations and determining cull figures. The technology in their deer ladders now enables them via a simple app to determine the quantity of venison available at any one time. This information would help in marketing venison and ensuring the regular supply that the big supermarkets require.

They recognised that access to a ladder might be a restriction for individuals or estates in deer culling and were also looking at the possibility of ladder sharing. This would obviously involve all deer meeting the same high standard.

Well, what do we get from all this? Most importantly, deer are now being taken very seriously by all Government agencies as well as major landowners such as the RSPB. Deer management is being talked about openly and the public engaged.

What was disappointing was that, despite almost every Forestry England deer office being present, no-one from FE or Defra gave an update on the long-promised England Deer Strategy or if the WD2 Deer Management Grant of £105 per ha, per year would re-open for applications.

Overall, this was an excellent conference and full credit must go Alastair Boston from the FC for pulling it together and attracting the great and the good from the deer world.



# NEW INSECTICIDE OPTION TO HELP PREVENT HYLOBIUS DAMAGE TO TREES

**Dr Ian Willoughby**, Forest Research, details the conditions for use of Coragen in large pine weevil management.

A new Extension of Authorisation for Minor Use (EAMU) has recently been granted by the Chemicals Regulation Division of the Health and Safety Directorate (CRD) for the insecticide Coragen (200 g/l chlorantraniliprole; MAPP 19498; FMC Agro [www.Fmc-Agro.co.uk](http://www.Fmc-Agro.co.uk)) to protect trees against Hylobius attack.

The EAMU covers the use of Coragen as an insecticide spray on bare rooted or cell grown trees after lifting in ornamental plant production situations only (i.e. 'pre-treatment' of trees in forest nurseries), to reduce damage from browsing by Hylobius abietis when trees are subsequently planted on restock sites.

Chlorantraniliprole is a non-neonicotinoid synthetic insecticide that has a relatively low mammalian toxicity, is around a hundred times less toxic to aquatic life than alpha-cypermethrin or cypermethrin, and has not been linked to bee decline in the same way as some neonicotinoids have.

Past research (Willoughby et al., 2020; Hardy et al., 2021; Moore et al., 2021) has shown that chlorantraniliprole can be as effective as acetamiprid in reducing damage to trees from Hylobius. Typically, the use of

trees pre-treated with chlorantraniliprole should provide sufficient protection for the first growing season after planting on a restock site.

Anyone wishing to use Coragen in this way must download a copy of the EAMU (available at <https://secure.pesticides.gov.uk/offlabels/search.asp>) and follow all of the conditions of use contained in it, and on the Coragen product label.

Some of the key considerations for its safe use are as follows:

- Applications should be made at a concentration of 0.0648 ml of product in 1.5-20 ml of water. Each tree should receive between 1.5-20 ml of solution such that the maximum dose per tree is 0.0648 ml of product, and a maximum of 2,700 trees per hectare subsequently planted so that the equivalent maximum application rate of 175 ml Coragen per hectare as listed in the authorisation is not exceeded.
- Applications should be made in an industrial building via an enclosed cabinet system with local exhaust ventilation.
- Sprays should only target the stem (it is permitted, but not necessary, to treat foliage), and treatment of roots and soil is

prohibited. Complete coverage of the full circumference of the stem will help and is important to achieve the best protection. Trees can be turned during spraying (e.g. applying half the dose to each side of the stem so that the maximum dose rate of 0.0648 ml of Coragen is not exceeded) to achieve this if necessary.

- Workers handling freshly treated transplants (e.g. for bagging or turning transplants during spraying) must wear suitable personal protective equipment (coveralls and gloves).
- Workers planting treated transplants should wear personal protective equipment as specified in the HSE AFAG leaflet 103 'Planting' (<https://ukfisa.com/Safety/Safety-Guides/fisa-103>).
- Planting bags used to deliver trees to the forest should not be placed within road or forest drains, and they should be gathered up and removed from the restock site at the end of each day.

This Extension of Authorisation was sought by Forest Research on behalf of the forest industry and a further submission covering the use of Coragen as a 'top up' post planting treatment within forests has also been made and is being considered by the regulators.

Currently the only insecticide approved for use as a 'top up' spray on restock sites is Forester (100 g/l cypermethrin; MAPP 13164; [www.fargro.co.uk](http://www.fargro.co.uk)). Approval for another formulation of chlorantraniliprole has also been sought from CRD, and Confor are supporting that process.

Insecticides should only be used as a last resort where there are no other effective non-chemical options available. The Forest Research report (Willoughby et al., 2022) gives detailed guidance on how to take an integrated approach to the management of Hylobius abietis including the use of non-chemical methods. It will be updated in due course to include details of this and any further changes to insecticide approvals.



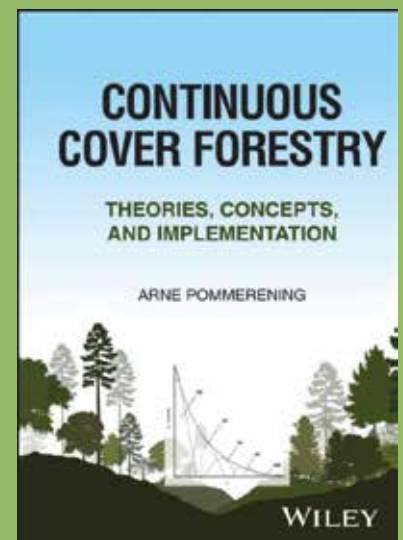
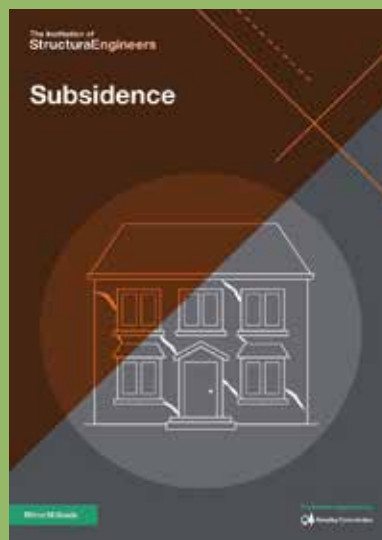
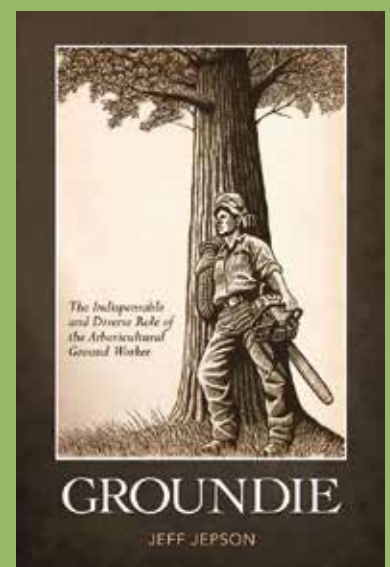
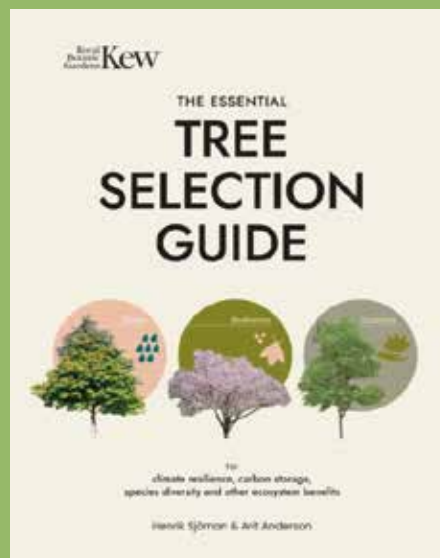
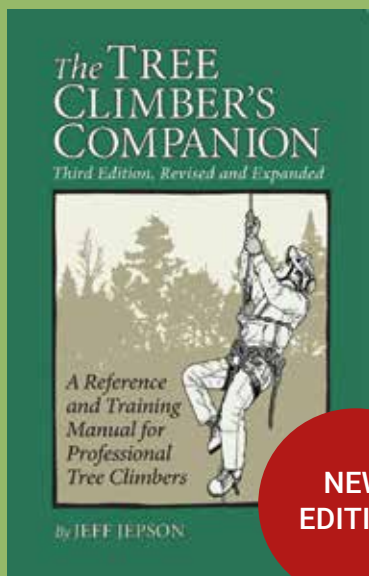


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# NEW INDUSTRY SURVEY REVEALS GAPS IN UNDERSTANDING OF TREE IMPROVEMENT

Experts call for clearer information and support around accessing improved materials after industry survey responses.

A new survey undertaken by Maelor Forest Nurseries, a member of BSW Group, reveals that 42% of professionals across the forestry industry feel they can't access the right improved materials for their needs.

The survey, which engaged a wide range of key industry stakeholders, sought to understand how tree improvement is perceived and valued within the sector. The research also hinted at the need for an authoritative body to provide verified and reliable information on the topic, with many participants revealing they consult vastly different sources to learn about the field's latest developments.

Not having an authoritative source for information leads to confusion and misconceptions. For example, over a quarter (26%) of respondents had fears that tree improvement makes crops less resilient, when actually the opposite is true. And around one in four (23%) revealed that fears over costs were holding them back – when the improved yield and consistency of improved material actually leads to higher returns for businesses.

This knowledge gap is making a real impact on the wider industry as forest managers and timber manufacturers needlessly miss out on superior products.

Andrew Henry, Nursery Director for Mae-

lor Forest Nurseries, commented: "As an industry we must do much better at sharing the benefits of the significant improvements made through tree breeding.

"There is real confusion around cost versus return which is particularly telling – with some respondents seeing price as a barrier rather than understanding the vast financial returns that improved breeding is continuing to deliver, from better timber quality, higher yields and reduced rotation times.

"As tree improvement across species becomes increasingly important in addressing challenges like climate change, pests, and disease, we need trusted industry bodies to step up and provide clear, verified information to ensure that stakeholders can make informed decisions.

"The forestry sector needs to advocate much better and share in a more accessible way these great results across the whole industry, investor base and our nations governments. We're proud of the industry leading and innovative work we're doing at Maelor to improve the resilience, quality and commercial appeal of the trees we supply for the timber crops that will be used for generations to come."



## NICHOLSONS STRENGTHENS EXPERTISE BY PARTNERING WITH CHARLTON ABBOTTS FORESTRY

Nicholsons and Charlton Abbotts Forestry have partnered to expand their forestry and arboricultural services. The newly merged team benefits from over 110 years of combined expertise in the industry.

Both companies share a strong foundation of aligned values, built on a commitment to quality, environmental management, sustainable land practices and family-driven principles.

This partnership comes at an opportune moment as Charlton Abbotts founders, Will and Sue Wilkinson, would like to have robust succession and actively sought out the ideal custodian for their business.

They said: "As a small company with an ever-increasing administrative burden, linking in with a larger company like Nicholsons, with similar values to ours, is the way forward. Primarily, this move will enable us to ensure that the woodland management



service we provide to our clients, is future proofed.

"It will mean that we can both, in the longer course of time, progressively step back. We are keen that our employees and





# FURTHER MEASURES IN ENGLAND TO PROTECT TIMBER INDUSTRY FROM TREE PEST

A new spruce tree planting restriction was announced in October for the existing Demarcated Area (DMA) in parts of East Anglia and South-East England.

Landowners, businesses and land managers are urged to comply with new requirements and stay vigilant to protect against Ips typographus. Planting spruce trees for ornamental and scientific purposes, growing on nursery sites for trade, or the planting of Christmas trees, will be permitted in specific circumstances detailed in the notice.

Christmas tree growers in the affected area can continue to grow an unlimited number of spruce trees up to three metres in height above the root collar before authorisation is required.

The new restrictions come after further findings this year, including the first UK finding of Ips typographus on Sitka spruce in July, and are part of the continued action being taken to limit the spread of the beetle and protect our nation's trees, forestry and timber industries.

These incursions are occurring in England as the beetle is blown over from the continent. The pest prefers stressed or dying trees but, under the right conditions, it can attack healthy trees.

The new requirements came into force on 29 October across the existing DMA in the South East of England and East Anglia prohibiting the planting of spruce trees (Picea A.Dietr). Areas affected include parts of Lincolnshire, Bedfordshire, Cambridgeshire, Norfolk, Suffolk, Hampshire, Berkshire, Buckinghamshire, Hertfordshire, Surrey, Greater London, Sussex, Kent and Essex.

Confor National Manager for England John Bruce said: "Confor welcomes stronger measures to help tackle the threat of Ips typographus infestations breaking out of South-East England.

"When we talk about the spruce resource in the South East and East of England, we must not confuse it with the ex-

tensive spruce forests we have in wetter Northern and Western areas of the UK. While Norway spruce (the predominant spruce in this area) remains a component on some woodland estates and on the right soils, in general terms it is not being extensively planted in this drier climate (even before Ips) and there are lots of sites where existing spruces are under stress, unhealthy or windblown.

"While the new restrictions are likely to impact on local growers that want to grow spruce for timber where site conditions would have allowed it, this move is clearly intended to help protect the wider forestry and timber industry in the UK.

"Ultimately this is about limiting the available habitat and conditions for Ips typographus to get a foothold in the UK, hence Confor fully supports this action by government."

Existing restrictions remain in place to limit the spread of the pest through timber movement by requiring pre-notification and authorisation by the Forestry Commission of any felling and movement of susceptible material within the DMA.

It is important for landowners to continue to check the health of spruce trees on their land, identifying stressed, fallen, and snapped trees, and taking action to remove them and any surrounding susceptible material. Replacement with non-susceptible tree species is also encouraged to limit the possibility of populations of Ips typographus establishing and to prevent spread to other areas.

Forestry Commission Head of Plant Health Forestry Andrea Deol said: "Ips typographus can have a serious impact on spruce trees, and so restricting spruce planting in some areas of East and South East England ahead of the tree-planting season will help with our ongoing eradication efforts.

"All landowners, managers and timber processors are encouraged to remain vigilant and report any sightings of the pest via our Tree Alert Portal."

the specialist contractors we work with can continue to work with us on the estates they have been involved with. The arrangement with Nicholsons fully enables this".

Justin Mumford, Nicholsons Director of Forestry, Arboriculture & Ecology, added: "The integration of Charlton Abbots into Nicholsons forestry and arboriculture will allow the combined team to deliver seamless, bigger, better, together services, combining advanced woodland management techniques and environmentally conscious strategies.

"With this, Nicholsons takes a meaningful step towards enhancing the future of forestry across the region, safeguarding and nurturing woodlands with expertise, care and forward-looking strategies."







# Firewood and grey squirrels

**Julian Evans** considers two of the most common challenges impacting small woodland owners.

**T**his unlikely combination – firewood and grey squirrels – arise from two visits in the summer, to Eswatini (Swaziland) and to a Hampshire estate. Both yielded thoughts and reflections that I pass on in this Woodland Owner piece.

## ROADSIDE RETAILING

A common sight in Eswatini is seeing small stallholders selling artefacts, carvings, craftwork and, notably, stacks of firewood and small poles at roadside. You can see this in the first picture. It was beside the main road from the capital, Mbabane, to Mhlambanyati in the middle of the Usutu Forest (where I continue to monitor plantation sustainability in successive rotations).

The cut logs are piled so as to maximise aeration, are mostly of wattle (*Acacia mearnsii*) but sometimes eucalyptus, and the purchaser can buy any amount. The poles are all eucalyptus and some may even be treated as a creosoting plant has opened in the last few years. (Fig 1)

We are familiar with roadside 'retailing' for fruit, vegetables and eggs when someone has a surplus, and either it's help yourself or for a contribution. But the question arises for the small woodland owner: can we market our produce more imaginatively? Can we develop a woodland based 'veg box scheme' for sticks, poles, small stakes, firewood etc, with the huge difference of being once or twice a year, rather than weekly or fortnightly? But a bigger problem seems the matter of passing trade.

Fig. 1



We can't sit at the gate for ever and day, and how trusting is an honesty box?

My visits to Eswatini always make me think, and perhaps the photo will prompt an innovation too. Difficulties with marketing is a key cause of why so many woods, especially small ones, are neglected and not yielding what they could. And forgive the homily, but thinning and opening up of neglected woodland is probably the single greatest aid to enhancing their biodiversity and conservation benefit.

## GREY SQUIRREL DAMAGE

Few readers of FTN will need reminding about the bark stripping damage squirrels do. They are a scourge of young broadleaved woodland, particularly but not exclusively of beech, sycamore and oak. But is it always recognised?

Rather like attributing all dead trees in hedgerows to 'it must be ash dieback', when in many instances it is yet another cycle of elms growing to 6 or 7m and then being reinfected and dying from Dutch elm disease, is all squirrel damage seen for what it is?

In the second photo, taken looking across a field on a country estate in Hampshire, several dead sycamore tops are evident; all are caused by grey squirrel bark stripping. (Fig 2)

This year stripping damage to young (5-15 years old) sycamores has been everywhere – roadside trees, along motorway embankments, in patches of sycamore regeneration, and even in young Woodland Trust plantings. The damage has only killed the tops of the trees. This leads to forking or multiple stems in later years and rules out production of worthwhile timber.

Being more aware of just how widespread the depredations of grey squirrels are will help keep to the forefront the issue of how best to curtail this wretched but, to many, endearing pest.

Fig. 2





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MULTIPLE STYLES



Attendees of the Good Practice Guide launch on 22 October paid a visit to the Glaisters Bridge Community Woodland near Corsock.

The site is part of an innovative partnership between Foresight Sustainable Forestry Company (FSFC) and Upper Urr Environment Trust (UUET), with the land leased to the local community for 20 years.

The first 250 trees – a mixture of Oak, Birch Hazel and Alder – were planted by volunteers in June of this year. UUET has ambitions for signs, seating, wildlife scrapes and a wide range of public and biodiversity benefits.

### Want to see your picture here?

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

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

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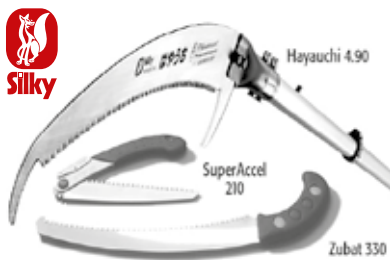
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