



Week beginning	Confor Activity	
	England	Wales
6 Jan		
13 Jan		Brecon Beacons mega catchment steering gp Mid Wales Area Statement Workshop
20 Jan	Forestry Climate Change Working Group	Senedd Stakeholder event
	Tree Health Policy Group	
	National School of Forestry lecture	
	Confor team meeting	
27 Jan		Woodland Workshop Marches
		Research Commissioning Group
		Processor pre-liaison meeting
3 Feb	Wood for Good	
	Confor Timber Statistics group	
	Timber Passporting group	
	National Tree Safety Group	
	ELMS development	
10 Feb	APPG on forestry	
	UKWAS board	
	Dartmoor Woodland Advisory Group	
	Northumberland Forest Vision	
	Southeast Committee	
17 Feb	Deer Initiative board	
	Applicants focus group	NRW Timber Liaison
	Zac Goldsmith MP	Confor Wales Committee
24 Feb	Team meeting in Edinburgh and Confor dinner	
	Confor Board	
	Hylobius Industry Research Group	
	ELMS development	Welsh Government – Forest & Land Policy Update
	East England Committee	FISA – Managing Health & Safety Event - Wales

UK NEWS

Staff changes

We are very pleased to confirm that we have now signed a contract with Andy Leitch to take over from David Sulman as Deputy Chief Executive with the same key roles and responsibilities. Andy will join Confor on April 6th. He brings a wealth of experience and knowledge.

Andrew Heald will be leaving Confor at the end of February to become full-time consultant, initially working with WWF international on their New Generation

Plantations platform, and with Edinburgh University's sustainability team as their forestry advisor.

#TheFutureIsForestry prize

The Confor essay and video prize awards ceremony will be held at an afternoon tea in the Houses of Parliament on 24 March from 4-6pm. Confor members are welcome to attend: contact Neil Cuthbert, neil@publicaffair.coop to book a place. More information and the shortlisted writers and film-makers are on the [Confor website](#).

A Fund for our future

We are gathering feedback for a prospectus for a Fund to support a wide range of activities, from research to statistics to promoting the industry and help to tackle skills shortages. This Fund would collect money annually from the UK forestry and wood processing industry. If you would like to know more, contact Stuart Goodall, stuartg@confor.org.uk or 0131 240 1410.

Timber Transport Conference

The Timber Transport Forum's biennial conference will take place on Friday 20 March at the North Lakes Hotel and Spa at Penrith. See the full programme and book tickets on the [Confor website](#).



All-Party Parliamentary Group on Forestry and Tree Planting

Our cross-party group of parliamentarians met on 11 February in Westminster. Ben Lake, MP for Ceredigion, was elected Chair. The group will focus on the actions needed to meet the government's planting target of 30,000 hectares per year to 2030. Full story on the [Confor website](#).



Pictured: APPGF members (L-R) Lord Carrington, Lord Caithness, Lord Colgrain and Ben Lake MP with Stuart Goodall, Confor CEO (right).

Tree planting for a net-zero UK

The UK Committee on Climate Change has produced a report to advise government policy, *Land use: policies for a net-zero UK*, largely based on its earlier Land use and Biomass reports. Confor has prepared a [briefing for members](#) on the report, welcoming the priority given to tree planting and woodland management, but raising some questions about the economic analysis and resulting policy proposals.

The report was quickly followed by a call for evidence from the Committee on Climate Change for setting the UK's sixth carbon budget. [Confor's response](#) to this consultation provided the opportunity to raise these questions and provide evidence on a wide range of issues around forestry and carbon.



Confor members will have received the February edition of *Forestry and Timber news*, including a Q&A with Forestry England CEO Mike Sneddon, opportunities in farm forestry, Forestry and Land Scotland's restocking policy, the launch of a series on the Year of Plant Health, a feature on training and education, plus market reports and Confor's strategic

priorities for 2020. If you are not a member and are interested in joining to receive FTN, contact your national manager (details below).

Woodland Ecological Condition

The National Forest Inventory have published a [significant new report](#) on the ecological condition of UK woodlands. This provides vital baseline data to inform the success of woodland policies and incentives in delivering for biodiversity in the future. The data shows that all kinds of woodland, including wood-producing forests, can deliver for biodiversity. This data will support Confor's own in-depth report exploring the relationship between woodland management and wood production, due to be released in April.

Plant Health News

Ips typographus

Work to eradicate the Eight-toothed Spruce Bark Beetle found in woodland in Kent is continuing. It has been suggested that the infestation may have been present for 2-3 years. Intensive monitoring of the area is continuing. Traps in the vicinity of the coast have revealed beetles, which are thought to have been blown across the Channel. There are large populations of this beetle in continental Europe. Ordinarily, this beetle is a secondary pest, preferring weakened or stressed trees, however, under favourable conditions, populations can increase and may attack healthy trees.

Dendroctonus micans

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

Plant passporting

Members are reminded that the new arrangements for plant passporting were

introduced on 14 December 2019. Plant passports are required to accompany the movement of all conifer roundwood and roundwood of Sweet Chestnut and Plane in the UK, together with bulk bark, brash and wood chipped on harvesting sites. Christmas trees over 3 metres and decorative foliage from such trees are also covered by the new controls. Sawdust, wood chips and slabwood with bark are currently considered to be a lower risk and are not expected to require Plant Passports. Companies that are already FC Registered Forestry Traders will be able to use their current registration reference, until a new system is introduced by Defra, which will then provide a new RAPO number. For further information, please see [here](#).

Plant Health Assurance Scheme

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

Work with government to communicate to Members the risks, mitigation opportunities, and need for vigilance of existing and new pests and diseases.

Plant Passports

A full update on plant passports will be available in the April edition of *Forestry and Timber News*.

Confor's 2020 Plant Health plan

The following priorities on plant health were agreed by the Board as part of the Confor business plan:

Work with government to **maintain existing funding** for plant health mitigation and restocking, and work to embed plant health support into future support schemes.

Continue to press government on Confor's asks in the Plant Health and Brexit paper to **stop imports of high-risk trees in**

pots, building on the recent ban of large trees to mitigate OPM infection.

Continue to press government on Confor's asks in the Plant Health and Brexit paper to continue to **promote the use of homegrown firewood**.

Continue to work with FISA to communicate to Members the **risks of removal of ash** infected with Ash Dieback and responsibilities for tree safety risk management. Furthermore, continue to work with government to support restocking of productive species to replace ash for the future.

WALES NEWS

Anthony Geddes



Confor Wales Knowledge Share Event

Increasing the Value
of Timber

24 MARCH 2020

*Morning: The Centre,
Mwrog Street, Ruthin,
LL15 1LE*

*Afternoon: Clifford Jones
Timber Ltd, Brickfield
Lane, Ruthin*

Cost incl. lunch: £20

*To highlight the change in
demands in the timber
supply sector and to
explore how political policy
is reshaping timber usage
and forest outputs.*

*This event will also look at
a snapshot of the
technology available to
timber processors and
explore what embedded
carbon means for the
value of wood.*

[Book here](#)

WOODLAND CREATION & MANAGEMENT

Glastir Woodland Creation & Restoration Windows 7/8: With most applicants having received responses to the planting applications it would be great to know if you have been successful. The completion date for successful schemes is March 2021 and Confor Wales continues to press both Natural Resources Wales (NRW) and Rural Payments Wales (RPW) to commit to having contracts issued by June 2020.

Glastir Woodland Restoration: Contracts for Window 7 continue to be a challenging issue. In a recent meeting with RPW, Confor highlighted the impact of the significant delays which impact on purchasing stock and the risk to tree establishment success.

Rural Payments Wales: Recent operation of Glastir schemes has caused serious challenges to the industry. Confor has been invited to meet with RPW/NRW to try and improve performance in future. The Confor Wales Committee has prepared recommendations for improving processes which will be discussed with NRW/RPW in early March.

Glastir 9: Discussion is underway with NRW/RPW about a Glastir scheme for 2020. The details at present remain tentative but promising with potential to deliver Welsh Government's annual planting target. An announcement is expected soon.

National Forest for Wales: Confor continues to input into the National Forest project through the Woodland Strategic Advisory Panel This continues to progress at a significant rate with £4.5m additional funding committed for 2020 to develop delivery methods for woodland creation. The objectives are encouraging but as yet the structure or locations for delivery are unidentified.

Ash Dieback: The Chalara Operation Response Team met once in autumn 2019 and due to a lack of government resource

no further meetings have been proposed. This is a serious issue for landowners and Confor has repeatedly lobbied Welsh Government to provide support for costs of either felling or restoration. We will propose that this be done through Glastir Woodland Restoration grants.

TIMBER HARVESTING & PROCESSING

Natural Resources Wales: Confor and our members from the harvesting and processing sectors have been working hard to improve NRW communication and delivery. Several pieces of legislation combined with new processes have combined to make 2019 challenging.

Confor meets with CEO Claire Pillman and her team on a quarterly basis to ensure the industry voice is heard when developing policy and programmes. We have raised issues such as facilities works being suspended, Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) legislation, delays in direct production contract start dates and welfare policy implementation (to name just some). Our aim is to improve the way operational decisions are taken both at a policy level and on the ground.

The NRW organisational review that has been ongoing since April 2019 is now complete and there is an undertaking to review new contract operations and ways of working in spring 2020.

NRW Timber Liaison: The first NRW timber Liaison event is due to be held on 18 February:

**NRW Timber Trade
Customer Liaison Meeting**
18 February 2020

International Pavilion, RWAS
Showground, Builth Wells

Tea & coffee available from 9.30am

No registration required

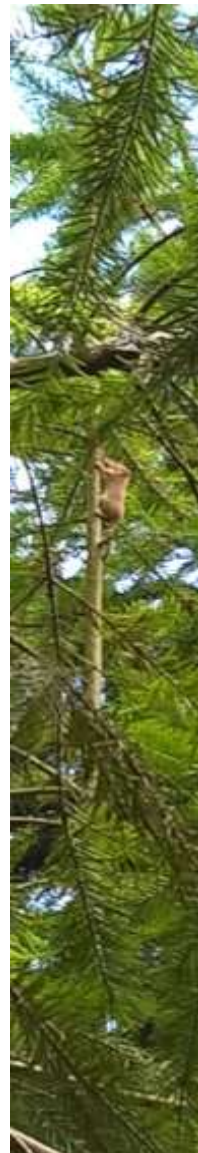
Welfare Regulation Policy: The Welfare policy is now in force and being policed on all NRW sites. The NRW and FISA guidance conflict in places so Confor is working with Pontrilas Sawmills and FISA to deliver a training event in late March that will hopefully address these questions.

POLITICAL & LOBBYING

Forest Sector Business Group (FSBG): Following meetings with Welsh Government, it is proposed to reform FSBG. This draws together commercial forestry expertise to represent the sector to Welsh Government, NRW and RPW.

ENGLAND NEWS

Caroline Ayre



Confor North Technical Event Practical management of forestry and wildlife

23 MARCH 2020

*Morning: Ivegill Village
Hall, Carlisle*

*Afternoon: Warren and
Lalbuss Woods, Ivegill*

Cost incl. lunch: £30

How we can
communicate the
message that judicious
forest management
provides greater benefit
than harm?

How best can we mitigate
the responsibilities being
thrust upon us?

This day will discuss the
practicalities of managing
multiple species on site
according to the
individual best practice
guidelines.

[Book here](#)

Confor England key work areas in 2020

The Confor board have agreed business plan priorities for 2020. In England these will be:

Challenge the Minister, Zac Goldsmith to maintain his political leadership on planting with a focus on supporting regional initiatives and changing attitudes towards land-use change to trees in agencies.

Embed woodland management support into Environmental Land Management schemes, to drive up woodland management.

Engage with the farming community through regional partnerships (beginning in Northumberland) so planting is recognised as an opportunity not a threat.

Work with Local Enterprise Partnerships to support supply chain development and work to embed productivity funding in ELMs.

Growing timber in the New Northumberland Forest

The announcement of the first phase of a Northumberland Forest is an exciting development which could herald a new era of productive tree planting in England to help tackle the climate emergency. Confor has been pressing for strong political leadership, and a step-change change away from the status quo that has seen people who want to plant trees being put off by an unwelcoming, bureaucratic process. Read the full story on the [Confor website](#).

Agriculture Bill

The Agriculture Bill has been reintroduced to the House of Commons and can be found [here](#). The bill's second reading debate can be found [here](#).

England Tree Strategy

Look out for the draft England Tree Strategy which is due to be published for consultation this spring.

Environmental Land Management Scheme (ELMS)

Confor, the Institute of Chartered Foresters, Royal Forestry Society and Woodland Trust have prepared a joint statement arguing that 'Trees, woodlands and forestry are in a powerful and unrivalled position by which to deliver many of the outcomes measured by the Government's 25 Year Environment Plan Indicator Framework.', and that 'A successful Environmental Land Management Scheme could support the forestry sector to provide significant and meaningful outcomes'. The organisations offered to engage with Defra to address the issues which would enable the sector to achieve this success. The full statement is available [here](#).

Regional Committees

The Confor England committees' business includes:

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

All committees are keen to recruit new members and are looking to appoint secretaries. Confor committees can count towards ICF CPD records. If you would like to join, have ideas for members events, or matters you would like to raise, contact myself or your local Chair:

South West (Devon & Cornwall)
Francis Fulford
greatfulford@googlemail.com

South West (Wessex): Nick Hoare
nick@stourhead.com

South East: Jamie Kirkman
jamie@balcombeestate.co.uk

East: Justin Mumford
Justin.Mumford@lgluk.com

North: Oliver Combe
oliver.combe@timberauctions.co.uk

Marches: Phil Argyle
phil@argylewoodland.co.uk

Not yet a member?

Confor is the voice of the forestry and timber sector, and our job is to make sure your voice is heard through our representation in political and technical forums. For more information, contact Anthony Geddes or Caroline Ayre.

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