

FORESTRY & TIMBER NEWS

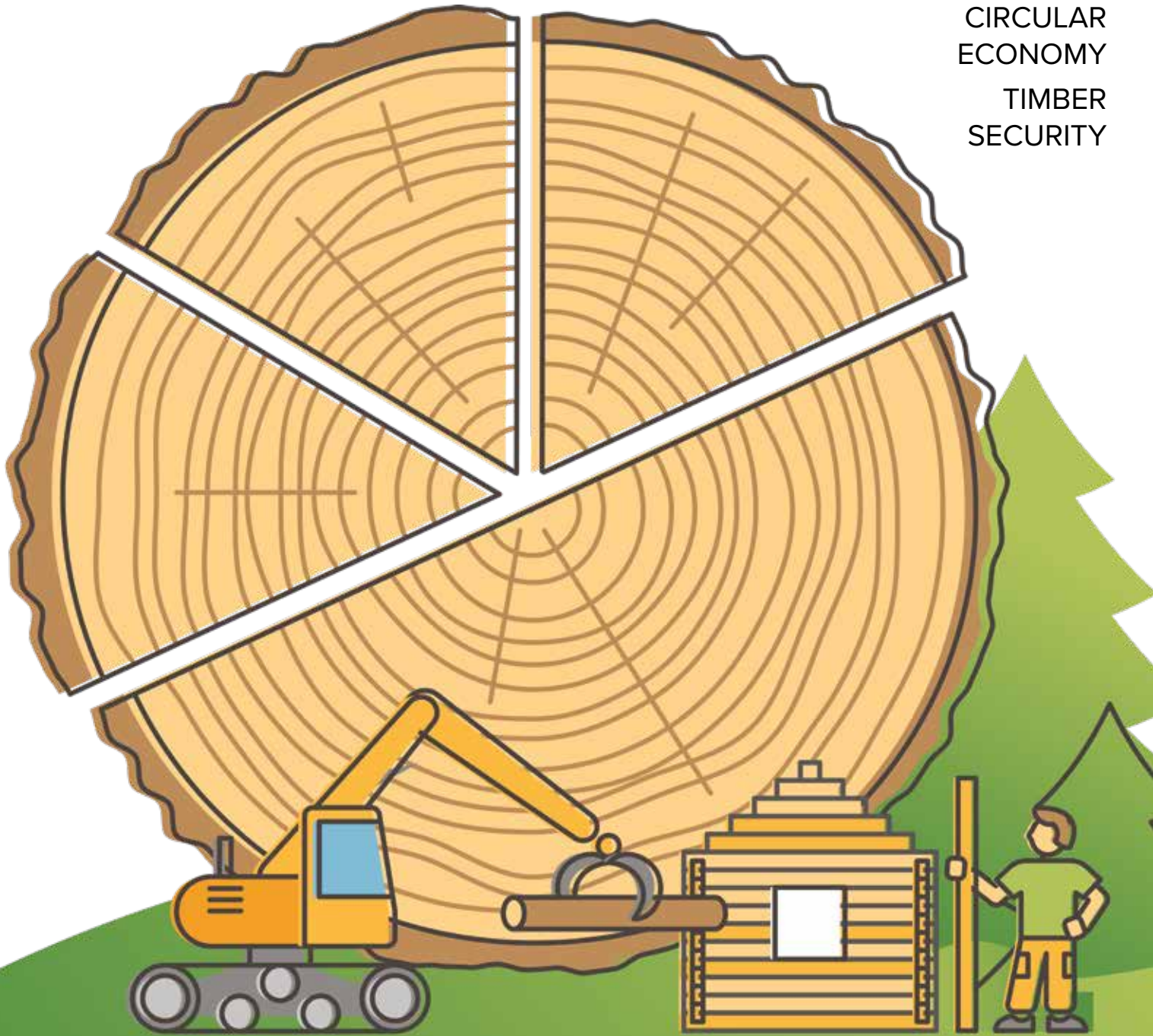
October / November 2025 Issue 131

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ECONOMY

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A rising demand



STUART GOODALL
CHIEF EXECUTIVE,
CONFOR

A core objective of Confor is to grow the market for timber and over the years that has been challenging to achieve. For example, Confor launched and owned Wood for Good along with Swedish industry, an initiative which tried hard for a long time to demonstrably grow the timber market.

That was very difficult to secure and even harder to determine it was Wood for Good which had made the difference.

Perhaps the biggest impact on demand in recent decades has been driven by government policy, most notably the incentives for biomass electricity and heat through the RHI and ROCs.

In that vein, the next big market development could come from a new government policy, this time for the use of wood in decarbonising housing and construction.

I attended the Labour Party Conference in Liverpool, and it was striking how discussions on delivering the Government's commitment to building 1.5m new homes in the lifetime of this Parliament included the warning that, without a new approach to low-carbon construction, targets for Net Zero would be significantly compromised.

It is that recognition of the need for new building solutions and the benefits of

building with wood that stand behind the UK Government's Timber in Construction Roadmap and Wales's Timber Industrial Strategy. Both are commitments by government to increase the use of wood, including homegrown timber, and both contain specific actions, developed with Confor and others, to achieve those commitments.

These initiatives could, and should, make a substantial difference in the marketplace and we in Confor are excited about playing our part in making sure that happens. We are also working with sawmill partners producing C16 timber to grow market share, thereby building the overall market for homegrown timber.

If that campaign is successful, then it could be expanded to embrace a wider range of UK timber products.

As is reported elsewhere in this issue, parties in Scotland are keen to get in on the act – pretty much every politician wants to use more wood, especially homegrown.

Confor's London conference on 20 November will focus on this theme, and I encourage members to come along and contribute to the debate. We are on the cusp of exciting developments, and it will be Confor businesses that will be key to making sure they succeed.

I look forward to seeing you there!

Confor is a membership organisation that promotes sustainable forestry and wood-using businesses. Confor members receive *Forestry and Timber News* for free as part of their membership. For more information on membership, visit www.confor.org.uk/join-us

Past issues and articles can be accessed online at www.confor.org.uk/news/ftn-magazine

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EDDER ACRES WOODLAND

Shotton Colliery, Co. Durham

175.82 acres / 71.15 ha

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Sporting rights owned and included.

Good access. Freehold.

Guide price £1,250,000



AMERSIDELAW FOREST

Chillingham, Nr Wooler, Northumberland

391.06 Acres / 158.25 Ha

A large, well-managed commercial forest entering a new rotation in good condition. This forest, with its stunning location and all of its productive ingredients, is an extremely attractive forestry investment and includes a forest lodge and wild swimming pond.

Sporting rights owned and included in the sale.

Freehold.

Guide price £2,600,000



FOWNHOPE PARK WOODLAND

Fownhope, Herefordshire

188.61 Acres / 76.33 Ha

A well-managed woodland featuring a diverse mix of conifer species ranging from 1964 to 2022 as well as mixed broadleaves.

Felling licence expiring 2029

Sporting rights owned and included.

Good access.

Freehold.

Offers over £900,000



BLAEN Y CAIE

Penisa'r Waun, Nr Caernarfon, Gwynedd

130.03 Acres / 52.62 Ha

A maturing commercial forest situated a mile from Snowdonia National Park predominantly stocked with spruce planted from 2012. Sitka and Norway spruce and Lodgepole pine feature. Small area of broadleaves classified Ancient woodland. Stream.

Sporting rights owned and included.

Good access.

Freehold.

Guide price £675,000



BICTON WOOD WEST

Callington, Cornwall

94.67 Acres / 38.31 Ha

Classic lowland ex-FC peninsula woodland. A productive commercial woodland that is advanced in restructuring and remains capable of producing further timber income.

A technically excellent site for growing commercial timber.

Good access.

Freehold.

Sporting rights owned and included.

Guide price £450,000



BELL COPPICE

Far Forest, Cleobury Mortimer, Shropshire

203.45 Acres / 82.33 Ha

A premier productive well-managed Oak woodland.

Deer fencing.

Stream.

Timber ready to harvest.

Good access.

3 meadows included in sale.

Freehold.

Sporting rights owned and included.

Guide price £1,350,000



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Addressing market uncertainties and making meaningful connections occupied much of the conversation at Forestry and Wood Processing at the Crossroads, a recent conference jointly hosted by Confor and Brodies LLP in Edinburgh.

Discussions at the forestry and timber event, which brought together businesses, industry leaders, legal advisers and MSPs from Scotland's main political parties, highlighted key challenges and opportunities in Scotland's forestry sector.

Community engagement is key

The importance of early and meaningful engagement with communities was raised at various points during the conference, by industry speakers and politicians alike. While social media has played its part in increased public scrutiny and platforms for sharing of



More market certainty and meaningful connections

views, some speakers voiced their concerns about too much attention being paid to misinformation over science-backed evidence.

Gresham House's Rob Carlow shared a positive experience of a Gresham-led approach to go beyond the statutory engagement process and engage with a local community proactively during a low-impact stage of the forestry cycle. Forestry consultant Claire Glaister emphasised the importance of language and speaking to communities on their level, recognising the day-to-day realities and concerns that are a priority to local people.

Legislative change is significant – but not yet certain

My fellow Brodies partner Emily Pike provided a helpful outline to conference delegates of the proposed inheritance tax changes and their potential impact

on forestry's appeal as an asset class.

With another UK Budget on the horizon though, it remains to be seen whether current proposals will be revisited by the Chancellor, and whether the likes of gift allowances – which have the potential to impact planning options in connection with the previously announced inheritance reforms - will be brought into the tax equation come 26 November.

Land reform too, has its part to play in shaping the future of Scotland's land; forestry included. Plans for mandatory land management plans and greater community engagement for large landholdings may impact on decisions to create woodland within these properties. The Land Reform (Scotland) Bill also affects the sale process for qualifying properties, which could create additional hurdles and add to the time taken for a sale to complete.

Creating more long-term certainty is key for confidence

A longer-term approach, a timber industrial strategy akin to one being adopted in Wales and a multi-annual budget commitment from government were also on the wishlist for the conference's speakers and contributors.

Much was discussed about the issues of being in a sector that cannot adapt quickly to change and relies on longer term sureties, to sustain investor and industry confidence. Changes of government and subsequently, government policies, not to mention significant legal reforms, were recognised as a perfect storm for the sector in creating uncertainty.

Pride in the sector

Conference delegates did not shy away from the obstacles that Scotland's forestry sector has to contend with, but it

Photo credits: Forestry Journal.



would be amiss not to mention the due recognition given to its value too.

Industry and politicians championed its significance, with Confor's Stuart Goodall citing forestry as one of the few industries that can tackle three current critical issues for society – cost of living, housing shortages and climate change/

net zero goals.

Innovation too was a focus, with Alex Murray of Glennon Brothers sharing how the firm has invested in robotics to speed up production levels and address housing targets.

It was particularly encouraging to see that there was much agreement and

alignment from industry and politicians across parties on what can and should be done to instigate positive change. The next few years will be crucial for the direction of forestry. What is not in doubt is the commitment of those involved in the sector.

Graeme Leith, Partner, Brodies LLP

Call for Timber Industrial Strategy in Scotland

Confor has called for a Timber Industrial Strategy and a partnership with a "supportive and active Scottish Government" to ensure the forestry and wood processing industry can deliver wide-ranging benefits for the economy and environment.

Speaking at Forestry and Wood Processing at the Crossroads, Chief Executive Stuart Goodall backed the idea of a Timber Industrial Strategy for Scotland, similar to those already in place in England and Wales, which have energised the industry there and provided much needed confidence to those businesses considering whether to invest and protect or create jobs.

There was enthusiastic cross-party political support for a Timber Industrial Strategy for Scotland, especially from Willie Rennie MSP (Liberal Democrats), Daniel

Johnson MSP (Labour) and Finlay Carson MSP (Conservative).

Mairi Gougeon MSP, Cabinet Secretary for Rural Affairs, also welcomed the idea and sent out a hopeful message, saying the Scottish Government was looking very closely at Confor's call for multi-annual budgets for woodland creation to help the forestry industry with longer-term planning.

She told the conference forestry was a "success story" in Scotland, adding over £1 billion annually in economic value and supporting 34,000 jobs. However, she recognised "challenges" and a "significant impact on industry confidence, particularly the cut to the woodland creation budget [announced in December 2023]".

However, she stressed that the budget had since been increased by 20% and that multi-

annual budgets were very much under consideration.

Finlay Carson said that long-term certainty was the most crucial factor for the industry to thrive, while Ariane Burgess MSP (Green) recognised commercial forestry would play a big part in planting, to provide the timber for future homes - part of a variety of planting to make Scotland a 'Forest Nation'.

After the event, Stuart Goodall commented: "This was an excellent event, with thoughtful and detailed contributions from both the industry and politicians. It's heartening to see that the political debate about forestry is much more informed and substantive than it has been in the past.

"Confor will continue promoting a message to all political parties of a more stable climate for woodland creation, tackling misinformation about our industry, and the need for a Timber Industrial Strategy. We will be publishing a manifesto for the May 2026 Holyrood election and look forward to engaging with all parties to develop a strategy so forestry and wood processing can deliver to its full potential for our economy and environment."



Spotlight on securing timber for the UK's future at London conference

The crucial actions needed to turn the UK Government's Timber in Construction (TiC) Roadmap into reality will be the focus of Confor's annual policy conference in London this November.

The UK Government's commitment to the Roadmap in March 2025 raised optimism in the forestry and wood-processing industry about the role the sector can play in key policy areas, such as boosting economic growth, creating rural jobs and achieving housebuilding targets.

In order to realise the opportunities, action needs to be taken now to secure industry confidence, grow a sustainable wood supply, bring more homegrown timber into the construction sector, and ensure a skilled workforce for the future.

This year's event is titled *Timber in Construction: From Roadmap to Reality* and will take place once more at the QEII Centre in Westminster, London on 20 November.

UK Forestry Minister Mary Creagh MP CBE, who has committed personally to deliver the Timber in Construction Roadmap, will speak on the UK Government's commitment to achieving the goals set out in the policy paper, as well as make real progress on the National Wood Strategy for England.

Naomi Matthiessen, Deputy Director for Landscapes, Nature & Forestry for the Welsh Government, will present the Welsh Timber Industrial Strategy, a landmark document published earlier this year that aims to increase both value and amount of timber grown across Wales.

Attendees will hear about a new timber frame manufacturing facility that uses robots to build frames for houses using homegrown wood, and from representatives of the architecture and construction sectors on how timber is currently being used in UK construction and what opportunities are available for the future.

Nick Boulton, Head of Technical & Trade Policy at Timber Development UK, will be sharing an international perspective on trade and future timber supplies, and we will be joined by Forest Research for an update on the work being done to identify resilient productive tree species.

There will be significant focus on the steps needed to build a skilled workforce among the next generation of the industry. Melanie McEwen, Operations Director of the newly established Forestry Training Service UK, will join a panel discussion on the central role of people to the TiC Roadmap and National Wood Strategy.

Confor will also be officially signing the Armed Forces Covenant at the event, formalising our commitment to helping veterans transition into forestry and timber careers after active service.

Stuart Goodall, Confor Chief Executive, said: "We have a packed programme again this year. Confor's work with governments in England and Wales has laid the groundwork for an expansion in forestry and the use of home-grown timber, and it's vital that we now take the required steps to ensure that businesses feel the benefit.

"I encourage everyone to come along and not only learn about the opportunities, but also to contribute to the debate about how we move from policy to delivery at speed."

The conference is kindly sponsored by Gresham House, Scottish Woodlands Ltd, Tilhill Forestry (BSW Group) and True North Real Asset Partners.

Book your tickets now: <https://bit.ly/ConforPC>

MEMBER UPDATE

Make use of member benefits



Eliza Hibbins-Cline,
Membership
& Marketing
Manager

With the summer now behind us, we are looking forward to hosting our upcoming annual London conference on 20 November. For those interested in UK forestry policy, it's an unmissable event with a range of speakers and networking opportunities. There is still time to book your ticket and remember - Confor Members get a great discount!

A big thanks to those who have already arranged payment for your 2025/26 membership renewal, we appreciate your ongoing support. For those who haven't yet paid, I would kindly encourage you to do so. If you have any queries with regards to your subscription, please don't hesitate to get in touch at members@confor.org.uk.

I would also encourage members (now we are entering our new subscription year), to leave any feedback on Confor's services via our Membership Survey (scan the QR code to access). 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. We welcome your opinions!

Finally, a quick reminder to our members regarding our helpline benefits! This offers you 30 minutes of free helpline advice from our associated specialists. This is meant as a first guidance, and all you need is your membership number to get started!

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Golden opportunities to get involved with next year's APF Exhibition

APF 2026 will be the Golden Anniversary of the APF Exhibition, marking 50 years since the first event at Longleat in 1976.

The APF Demo is the flagship event for the forest and arboricultural industries. It's the place for everyone to meet old friends, network, catch up on industry news and see the latest state-of-the-art machinery and equipment in action.

With work going on behind the scenes to make this Exhibition the biggest and best yet, including more events and competitions than ever before, APF 2026 is a golden opportunity to get your company noticed and increase your profile within the industry.

Sponsorship packages to suit all budgets are available.

The UK Lumberjack Championships

The Lumberjack Championships feature five disciplines that the competitors must complete, including the two-board climb, under hand chop, standing block and single buck. It also features the very impressive and noisy Hot Saw competition.

Sole sponsorship: £16,000

Co-sponsorship: £4,000

The UK Forest Worker Zone Winning Competition

A new event for the APF Demo, testing the skills, speed and experience of tractor winch operators against the clock



on a challenging course.

Sole sponsorship: £6,000

The APF British Open Tree Climbing Competition

50 of the UK's top arborists will compete against the clock to reach 10 targets within the canopy of the tree. This will be staged in a high profile location of the Arb Workers Zone in the heart of the show.

Co-sponsorship: £3,700 (one sponsor already confirmed)

The APF Great Big Tree Climbing Have-A-Go Area

Any visitor can try their hand at ascending into a tree using a rope and harness, test their head for heights and see whether a career in arboriculture is for them. This area was very popular with school groups in 2024.

Sole sponsorship: £2,500

Traditional Woodland Crafts Area

This area is very popular with visitors, due to the huge range of activities, displays, competitions, skills and have-a-go opportunities on offer. Sponsorship includes the World Log To Leg pole lathe turning championships, where the top 16 pole lathe turners compete head-to-head to turn two logs into two identical chair legs in the shortest possible time.

Sole sponsorship: £2,500

Entrances & Gates

We have two visitor entrances, car parks and paygates, which means there is over half a mile of entrance roads. These areas can be branded with banners, flags or machine placements to really catch the eye of arriving visitors.

Sole sponsorship: £4,000

In most cases, competitions can be branded with the sponsor's name. In addition to increased brand exposure at the show, all sponsors benefit from having their logo on the APF website, on all advertising, and on the cover of the show catalogue.

Dedicated social media posts and an article in a pre-show edition of either *Forestry Journal* or *Essential Arb* magazine are also available options.

Full details of all sponsorship opportunities, including smaller items like individual banners, can be found in the exhibitor section of the APF website.

APF 2026 will take place at the Ragley Estate, Warwickshire on 24-26 September. www.apfexhibition.co.uk

Nominations open soon for the 2026 Confor Awards

The annual Confor Dinner & Awards evening will next take place on March 2026 at Surgeons Quarter, Edinburgh.

This event is an opportunity to celebrate success and progress across the industry, recognising the individuals and organisations making a difference.

Nominations for the 2026 awards open on 10 November under four categories:

- Building Industry Resilience

- Championing Forestry & Timber Products
- Net Zero Innovation
- Tom A Bruce-Jones Memorial Award for Future Leader in the Forest Industry

Judging will take place early in the new year, with shortlisted entries to be announced in the February/March 2026 edition of *Forestry & Timber News*.

Budgets, building and Burnham on the mind

Stuart Goodall shares key takeaways from Confor's latest political engagement activities.

Autumn is party conference season and this year there is the added spice of Scottish and Welsh elections in May 2026. So far, we have attended the Labour party conference and held a political panel with the main parties in Scotland (see p6), as well as meeting with Scottish Cabinet Secretary Mairi Gougeon.

Meeting Mairi Gougeon

Since the savage cut to the 2024/25 planting budget announced in December 2023, Confor and Woodland Trust Scotland hold regular meetings with the Cabinet Secretary.

This has helped deliver an average of 12,000 hectares of new planting each year over the last two years, and a 20% uplift in this year's planting budget. However, concern remains that industry confidence to plant is in decline and interest this coming year looks like it could fall short of the available funds.

Andy Burnham sparked rumours of a leadership challenge in the Labour Party.



Regular meetings have been held with the Cabinet Secretary, Mairi Gougeon, to discuss new planting.

Scottish Forestry confirmed it has approved around 7,000 ha so far, and it would like to approve a healthy amount above the budgeted figure of 10,000 ha, given that a number of approved schemes normally don't get planted.

With the support of Ms Gougeon, Confor has worked with members to analyse future demand for land to plant and the obstacles to achieving a major step towards delivering Scottish Government's target of 18,000 ha/yr. The next stage is to present proposed solutions to the Cab Sec.

I have asked Ms Gougeon to put in place a multi-annual funding agreement for woodland creation to create greater certainty and it is hoped an announcement on that will be made soon.

Labour – homes, security and strategy

Against the backdrop of “will he, won't he” speculation of a leadership challenge from Andy Burnham, Kier Starmer sought to re-establish his authority at the Liverpool party conference. A barbed attack on Nigel Farage shored up his support but he said little more about Labour's plans for governing the UK. It feels like everyone is waiting for the Autumn Budget.

In the fringes and halls of the conference there was opportunity to speak with politicians and discuss issues of relevance to the forestry and timber industry, including delivering 1.5 million new homes using wood, timber security and the role of timber in Government's recently announced industrial strategy.

The Confederation of Timber Industries (made up of Confor, Timber Development

UK and the Structural Timber Association) supported a fringe event, as did STA, looking at the UK's housing crisis and the goal of delivering 1.5 million homes.

STA CEO Andrew Orris emphasised timber's potential to deliver up to 100,000 homes per year (from 40,000 homes/year now), its carbon efficiency, and the need for government regulation on embodied carbon to support timber use.

Other speakers highlighted timber's benefits for speed of build, cost-efficiency, and sustainability, and there was clear support for using more home-grown wood.

The event concluded with optimism about timber's future in UK housing, provided there is coordinated effort across industry and government. The point was made repeatedly across a number of fringe events that building 300,000 homes a year without addressing materials and carbon would blow a big hole in statutory targets for achieving net zero by 2050.

Notably, there was less debate and fewer events related to climate change and nature this year. This may reflect the Labour Government's increasing desperation to drive up economic growth.

In that vein I attended a Wood Panel Industry Federation private breakfast with Blair McDougal, Parliamentary Under-Secretary at the Department for Business and Trade to discuss issues including the importance of timber and wood panels to delivering Government's industrial strategy.

I also held a number of one-on-ones with Labour Ministers and advisers to highlight not just the importance of timber security, but the role of timber in national security – a theme we will build on further.



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New era for forestry skills in the UK

Newly appointed Operations Director **Melanie McEwen** shares the goals of Forestry Training Service UK (FTS UK) and the work already being done to overcome skills challenges.

About Melanie

I have a strong background in education, training, skills and qualifications, including as education lead for developing the young workforce in Dumfries and Galloway, and some time managing the Employability and Skills Service.

Though I do not have forestry training, I am very aware of the challenges faced by the sector and have previously been involved with Confor through a Growing Rural Talent Project.

I live in rural Dumfries and Galloway and studied Zoology at University in Aberdeen. My working life has been in various roles across the region, some with a national remit enabling me to work with peers across Scotland. Most recently I was Development Manager for charitable trust Shambellie House.

It was my role to implement the business plan and develop the house and grounds, which include five acres of ancient woodland, as a creative centre offering an annual programme of exhibitions, events and creative workshops in photography, art and textiles.

Please do check it out – it is a beautiful, tranquil location with some amazing trees! It is surrounded by the Shambellie Estate, which has commercial and ancient woodland with mature trees including Beech, Oak, Western Hemlock, Western Red Cedar and Larch.

It is a huge privilege to have been appointed to the role of Operations Director for FTSUK. I am looking forward to using my skills and experience to



WHAT IS FTS UK?

Forestry Training Service UK (FTS UK) is a new not-for-profit company set up by Confor to tackle skills and recruitment needs in the industry.

The venture has been financially backed by nearly 20 Confor member companies, with additional resource support offered by wider industry and public sector.

Melanie will be based at the SRUC site in Barony, near Dumfries.

work with industry to design a fit for purpose Forestry Training Service that meets the needs of individuals, employers, training providers and the sector as a whole across the UK.

Forest Training Service Design and Implementation

With service design principles in mind, I

will be working with the FTS Skills Board to fully explore present challenges and work towards designing a training service around the people we need to support, seeking operator, employer and sector input from day one.

My role has begun with researching and understanding the problem, undertaking a range of interviews, discussions and site visits with people in the sector. This has given me insight into the different perspective from training providers, employers and operators. I have also listened to views from people with analogous experience in other sectors.

We need to design and deliver a service which builds on what is good in current pathways and training, and identifies and fills existing gaps to offer a service that works better for the industry.

The first meeting of the FTS Skills Board is planned for mid-October.

Maelor Forest Nurseries sets new standard in tree delivery to improve establishment and resilience

As weather patterns become more unpredictable, achieving reliable tree establishment is one of forestry's biggest challenges. In response, Maelor Forest Nurseries, part of Tilhill Forestry, has introduced a market-leading cold chain delivery system – a first for the UK forestry sector.

The system is designed to maintain the physiological integrity of young trees from lifting to planting. When bare root trees are exposed to temperatures of 4°C or above, they begin to respire, consuming vital carbohydrate reserves, which can irreversibly damage fine root tissues. Once these reserves are exhausted, root recovery and establishment are severely compromised. With increasingly variable spring and autumn temperatures, this risk has become far more common, as unexpected warmth can push trees out of dormancy during storage or transit.



Maelor's cold chain approach maintains carefully controlled transport conditions, helping to suppress respiration, conserve energy reserves, and reduce dehydration and disease risks. Trees arrive on site in optimal physiological condition, ready for rapid establishment and healthy growth.

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A SIMPLE GUIDE TO COMMUNITY BENEFITS FROM FORESTRY

There is an increasing narrative developing around what benefits forestry actually delivers to local communities, and this is something that the sector will have to respond to. **Amanda Bryan** FICFor asks what community benefits are and how to go about delivering them.

With the pace of land use change increasing, rural depopulation and reduced or more centralised service provision, rural communities are looking to those sectors harnessing natural resources, including forestry, to put something back into and invest in local communities.

This is a philosophy that has some traction with national and devolved

governments as a range of new policies are being developed, most notably in the form of Community Wealth Building in Scotland. Focusing on investment in actions to address nature restoration and climate mitigation, whether from the private, public or voluntary sectors, there is an expectation that future adjustments to the Woodland Carbon Code will include the embedding of a community benefit add on – as signalled in this

year's WCC consultation.

Although not yet on the agenda, in due course we may also see the delivery of community benefits be part of the conditions for receipt of public funding.

Of course, there are already several projects delivering community benefits, and some are being rewarded for their efforts, receiving increased payments for carbon units – delivering what is often referred to as 'charismatic carbon'.



Community woodland leased by Foresight.

These projects have all developed their own approach to the delivery of community benefits (refer Box 1) but there should be a consistent approach, albeit locally appropriate, to provide assurance to all involved that everyone is being treated fairly and with consideration – including the community, the developer or agent and the landowner

Earlier this year I was involved in the development of a new Scottish Land Commission Community Benefits Route Map, which demonstrates that by taking a step-by-step approach alongside other stakeholder engagement work, identifying and sharing benefits of natural capital investment with local communities could be relatively straightforward if approached with openness and creativity by all those involved.

The Route Map and its accompanying resources, which include examples of community benefits, case studies and agreement templates, is a step-by-step guide for how to identify and agree community benefits. Aimed primarily at project developers and landowners, the Route Map will also be a useful resource for communities to help them understand how and when to engage >>



Amanda Bryan FICFor.

Box 1: Examples of Community Benefits

Access to Land/ Buildings – Housing for local people.	Research – Collaborative research responding to local priorities.
Access to Land/ Buildings – Local businesses/ social enterprise.	Infrastructure – Greening of existing housing stock – insulation, green infrastructure, water mgmt.
Access to Land/ Buildings – Provision of community facilities.	Infrastructure – Development or upgrade of paths/ tracks to link communities or local facilities.
Access to Land/ Buildings – Local clubs and societies.	Infrastructure – Development or upgrade of facilities to encourage use by local groups (e.g. improved river access etc.).
Access to Land/ Buildings – Community woodland/ allotments/ orchard etc.	Infrastructure – Develop car parking or other facilities to better manage wider public access and minimise community impacts.
Access to Land/ Buildings – Community led or Joint Venture renewable energy projects.	Infrastructure – Protect local infrastructure, services and housing from flooding by installing preventative measures (e.g. riparian planting, re-meandering, leaky dams).
Access to Land/ Buildings – For new entrants to farming and crofting (including woodland crofts).	Community Events – Provide facilities for community-led events or for the community to gather.
Job Creation – Use of local contracting businesses/ suppliers.	Health and Wellbeing – Work with NHS, social services and local groups to provide opportunities to connect and get outdoors.
Job Creation – Directly employing local staff.	Local Economy – Provide facilities for visitors to complement existing tourism offer in area.
Job Creation/ Training – Employing/ supporting apprenticeships.	Local Economy – Work with local tourism providers to support new initiatives to extend season/ extend stays/ manage visitor peaks.
Job Creation – Act as employer for community or partnership project roles.	Access to Local Firewood – Provide firewood at low/ no cost to households in need.
Training – Working with Local organisations to provide site/ venue for training (possibly for hard-to-reach groups).	Access to Local Firewood – Develop or contract out local firewood scheme.
Training – Supporting training for local groups/ people in land management related activities (inc. practical skills).	Benefit Sharing – Revenue benefit from sales of carbon/ biodiversity/ other credits.
Skills Training/ Knowledge Sharing/ Knowledge Transfer – In-kind support to community.	Benefit Sharing – Capital benefit from sale of land with increased value related to NCI.
Volunteering – Provide supported volunteering opportunities (including citizen science) for local people/ groups (including hard-to-reach groups).	Education – Provide guided site visits/ activities/ curriculum for local schools.
Education – Provide support for rural skills classes or similar.	Education – Provide site/ facilities for Forest Kindergarten, or summer/ after school clubs.

Source: Community Benefits from Natural Capital investment Route Map, Scottish Land Commission, 2025

in the development of a project to achieve the greatest mutual benefit.

The work was funded through the Facility for Investment Ready Nature in Scotland (FIRNS) and supported by NatureScot in partnership with The National Lottery Heritage Fund.

Community benefits are extremely wide-ranging in nature and are expected to be tailored and proportionate to the project being developed (taking scale and location into account) but most importantly they must be agreed as benefits by the local geographic community (see examples in Box 1).

One of the most important things for forest managers to consider is that community benefits are different to wider public benefits – for example increasing public access while definitely a public benefit may be seen as a disbenefit by a local community if they start to experience roads being blocked by roadside parked cars, increased litter and disturbance as we have already seen happen in visitor hot spots.

The examples provided in Box 2 help to explain the differences between the two.

The more transparent a project developer or landowner can be with the community about information, such as project objectives, finances, risks and delivery timescales, the more productive any discussion will be on what kind of benefits would be proportionate and deliverable. This could be as simple as facilitating local youth groups or schools to use a site for education purposes or could result in more formal arrangements such as the 20-year lease

Box 2: Public Benefits Vs Community Benefits

Public Benefit (General)	Community Benefit (Specific)
Increased public access	Creation of footpath to link local communities or to link local village to school.
Reduce flooding risk downstream	Reduce flooding risk for houses, businesses and infrastructure in local community.
Provision of education and interpretation facilities	Education offer to local schools and youth groups to meet their requirements. For example, use of site for rural skills students to undertake practical work or for local forest kindergarten.
Increased visitors to area	Co-ordinated efforts with local businesses, such as accommodation providers, hospitality and retail operators, to address identified seasonality issues.
Timber production	Low-cost firewood supply to those in fuel poverty locally.

Source: Community Benefits from Natural Capital investment Route Map, Scottish Land Commission, 2025

over 4ha Foresight have entered into with the Uper Urr Environmental Trust.

What is clear is that the more open and trusting the relationship between project developer to create a new community woodland, landowner and the local community the greater the potential mutual benefits and understanding potentially leading to smoother land use change.

So while fair sharing of benefits from natural capital investment is increasingly expected, as demonstrated by the development of a new British Standards Institute Nature Investment

Standard on Community Benefits (BSI Flex 705), and supported by the UK and Scottish Governments, I believe that by increased communication and collaboration between landowners and their agents and communities, mutual trust can be built with benefits for all parties achieved.

Greater engagement of communities in forestry projects will also go some way to improving understanding of the sector; how we operate, the standards we work to and what we offer wider society. With understanding comes acceptance.

Standing up for family woodlands

Confor, alongside the Country Land and Business Association (CLA) and Royal Forestry Society (RFS), has been working for several months to highlight the impact of inheritance tax reforms on family-managed woodlands.

This has included joint letters to Ministers and a constructive meeting with government officials in September. Our focus is across three key areas:

Family woodlands are different

- Represent long-term stewardship and intergenerational commitment.
- Financial characteristics differ from other businesses; income is deferred and cyclical, margins low, costs high.
- Particularly vulnerable to changes in tax treatment.

Unintended consequences of the reforms

- Risk of fragmentation and premature felling.
- Loss of confidence in new planting and long-term care.
- Discouraging active woodland management, continuous cover systems and longer rotations.
- Could add to the problem of unmanaged woodland (already estimated at 40% in England).

Government outcomes may be at risk

- Nature: Active management is vital to biodiversity and the 30by30/EIP targets.
- Timber: The Timber in Construction Roadmap relies on confidence in long-term productive forests.

- Climate / Net Zero: Resilient, well-managed woodlands are essential to maximising carbon benefits.
- Ecosystem services: Flood protection, soil health, water quality and wellbeing all depend on continued custodianship.

Alongside raising these points, we also suggested constructive solutions to help address the risks from the Business Property Relief (BPR) change due in April 2026.

By working collectively, Confor, CLA and RFS have ensured the voice of family woodland owners is being heard, and we will continue to press for practical ways forward to safeguard intergenerational management and the wide benefits it delivers.



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EXAMINING MANAGEMENT TECHNIQUES FOR THE SURVIVAL OF ANCIENT SEMI-NATURAL WOODLANDS

Clare O'Reilly, Trustee and Co-Chair of the Board for Woodland Heritage and Conservation Manager at Surrey Wildlife Trust, sought support from the Forest Industries Education and Provident Fund (FIEPF) for research into impact of coppicing on the diversity of flora in ancient woodlands.

My route into this sector has always been considered unusual, even by me. As a child obsessed by nature, especially trees, I spent two decades in international development (from retraining former child soldiers in farming and ecotourism, to removing landmines for safe movement and livelihoods), I stayed connected to land and its uses, drafting organisational environmental policy.

Wanting to return to habitats back home, I left the Middle East for Northern Ireland, arriving to volunteer in heathland reserves and the Mourne mountains, punctuated by ancient semi-natural woodlands (ASNW). A welcome change indeed.

FIEPF and the University of Oxford

Various Ranger jobs followed, specialising in woodland management. A few years later, as a member of Confor, I applied to FIEPF to undertake the University of Oxford's postgraduate-level course in Plant Biodiversity and Habitat Assessment Methods. I applied hoping to support my own career, but also the wider forestry sector by training colleagues and volunteers.

The course covered a wide range of methodologies and techniques, building skills to ensure an evidence-based approach to management. Working for a charity, the course would have been financially out of my reach.

My primary focus was an unanswered question in ASNW I now managed; "When we implement coppicing, how effective is it at increasing floristic diversity?"



Clare and Reserve Officers.

Ancient Semi-Natural Woodland Management

The 20th century saw major losses and changes to scarce and fragmented ASNW. By the 1980s, 40% was converted to plantations or colonised by invasive non-native species and lost to changing land use priorities like agriculture. Many remaining ASNW became high forests shading out light-demanding plants and associated organisms.

Across northern and central Europe coppicing dropped by 95% from 1905-1967, with derelict coppice reverting to high forest. Irregular silviculture as a form of Continuous Cover Forestry (CCF) was replaced by clear-felling with uniform species selection prioritised for timber quality, and limited intervention management taking place from neglect.

Specialist ASNW flora are vital in evaluating habitat quality, aging a woodland, and for inclusion in the Ancient Woodland Inventory (AWI). ASNW is floristically distinct from recent woodland and thus an important priority for conservation.

Where traditional management is reintroduced, approaches vary by organisation, site, or manager. Techniques creating a spatially and temporally dynamic mosaic of successional woodland stages results in varying light levels and habitat structures which aid ground flora diversification. This influences invertebrate diversity, and thus bird, bat, and mammal prey populations. Management can also extensively prolong tree life.

Understanding vegetation dynamics



Deadhedged stool protection Site 3.

and species interactions is critical to successful landscape-scale ecosystem restoration. Studying ASNWs with varying management types, and evaluating habitat structure, vascular plant diversity (richness and abundance), and nutrient levels (soil pH and light/temperature levels) at different successional stages could identify successes and failures of biotic influence to define best practice and site-specific conservation methods.

My research was in Surrey, England's most wooded county, with 22.4% tree cover and a quarter of woodland listed as ancient. The study was based on a combination of ancient woodland indicator species (AWIs) defined by The Wildlife Trusts, Field Studies Council, and Woodland Trust.

Methodology

I selected three ASNW where a forestry plan had defined rotational coppice coupes dominated by Hazel (*Corylus avellana*) and stands of irregular silviculture and limited intervention / derelict historic coppice were evident. All sites had forestry plan baseline data but limited subsequent survey.

Sites were split into three main Management Areas where woodland management had occurred, but key biotic factors such as grazing and burning had not. To separate effects of management types on examined response variables, all surveys were

in purely deciduous woodland, homogeneous in specific environmental conditions including elevation, terrain morphology, and soil type.

Field survey occurred May-July to limit seasonal variation but allow a broader array of recorded species, giving a clearer compositional picture. Excluded areas included high usage and tree safety areas due to trampling and extensive canopy management, and microhabitats like deadwood.

Management Areas were narrowed to 2ha total Sample Areas; calculated as 4 x 0.5ha coppicing coupes split into four temporal stages of a hazel

coppice cycle (new; young; intermediate; and old). Irregular silviculture and limited intervention/derelict coppice (unmanaged 20+ yrs old) had 2ha Sample Areas each (also geographically separated and including temporal stages of neglect) selected via initial on-site inspection (noting seed banks and abiotic variables might differ) to reduce inflated measures of richness within smaller coppice. Sample Areas were >10m apart, with >10m outside buffers to reduce edge effects.

Finally, additional (10m x 10m) quadrats were marked to collect measurements of habitat structure. Basal >>



Gatekeeper Butterfly in Site 3.



Irregular Silviculture.

area, vertical structure, stem size-classes and understorey density were recorded, and percentage of canopy openness (light level) measured with a densiometer 1.5m above ground. A gauge recorded temperature, and soil samples for pH analysis collected using a meter with temperature correction on a 1:5 soil paste after collection.

Focus was on shrub layer and below as the simple stratified design aimed for systematic search of vegetation, ease of replication, and a standard-sized plot each time.

Results

Initial survey results were interesting. Due to excessive shading, limited intervention / derelict coppice retained fewer AWI species and had the least complex habitat structure. Site 1 and Site 2 showed similar species presence with areas choked by dense leaf litter and shading, allowing limited growth of native woody species, mostly small patches of holly (*Ilex aquifolium*), bramble (*Rubus fruticosus* agg.), and Scot's Pine (*Pinus sylvestris*).

Highest numbers of AWIs recorded (seven in Site 1 and nine in Site 2 against baselines of 10 and 12) were in the earliest stage of dereliction. Site 3 had a higher number of species (10 against a baseline of 15) but a higher rate of loss, even at this peak point which was also in earliest dereliction. The latest stages of dereliction registered no AWI species across all ASNWs.

This is sadly typical of lowland British

ABOUT THE FOREST INDUSTRIES EDUCATION AND PROVIDENT FUND

The Education Fund supports career development for Confor members. Applicants can be individuals or companies, they must present clear reasons for doing the course, show how it will further their careers, and provide some background information.

Applicants can be at any stage in their careers and can pursue a wide range of training including attendance at conferences, participation on specialist courses (e.g. ecology, tree health, timber technologies, GIS) or management skills or practical training (e.g. chainsaw, drones, mechanical).

Trustees are also interested in requests to co-fund with other bodies as this may broaden the scope of training opportunities available.

Awards can only be offered prior to training. It generally takes about three weeks to process an application, with offers of up to £1,000 per application. For more details and an application form, visit the Confor website.

The Provident Fund is available in cases of hardship, for example long-term illness, personal injury or death. It has more flexibility, and all applications are treated in confidence by the Trustees.

ASNWs which have become neglected, with closed canopies, and homogenous structures with survival of only hardy shade-loving species.

In Site 3, irregular silviculture and coppicing had similar structural complexity, but notably increased floral diversity compared to limited intervention areas. In some irregular silviculture areas, thinning of the canopy resulted in more light-demanding, competitive plants where large-scale intervention following years of neglect created an apparent nutrient "time-bomb". However, irregular silviculture and coppicing were considered a benign and preferable alternative to irreparable damage from outright management neglect.

Coppiced areas consistently showed increased floristic diversity. Site 1 showed most notable presence, with 31 AWI plant species across the coppicing areas, including Scaly male-fern (*Dryopteris affinis*), Wood Sorrel (*Oxalis acetosella*), Dog's Mercury (*Mercurialis perennis*), and extensive areas of Wood anemone (*Anemone nemorosa*) and bluebells (*Hyacinthoides non-scripta*). A variety of orchids were noted including Early purple orchid (*Orchis mascula*) and Greater butterfly-orchid (*Platanthera chlorantha*). The baseline showed 19 AWIs.

New and young temporal areas had highest floristic diversity, but temporal stage and inter-site comparatives showed diversity varied. Inevitably, coupes with poor browsing protection held least diversity. Coppice showed high levels of nutrients in the upper soil layers compared to unmanaged / derelict areas, but this may be due to faster nutrient turnover, potentially lower overall capital.

Results were inconclusive against irregular silviculture and depended heavily on management practices and temporal stage. Management techniques varied dramatically, including stool height, protection measures, irregular silviculture consistency across stands etc.

Initial findings have already refined management; a satisfying, immediate benefit of research. I could also demonstrably show volunteers and staff how evidence can directly define appropriate management, and continuation of the study will further enhance recommendations. With climate change designing appropriate management ahead of time will prove critical to ASNW survival.

My endless thanks to the FIEPF.

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Beyond the buzzword

Confor's **Eleanor O'Neill** attended the latest FEG Symposium to hear why resilience needs to be built into all aspects of forestry, from bridges to flooding.

Chairman of the IAGrE Forest Engineering Group (FEG) Jock McKie kicked off the 2025 FEG Symposium by welcoming attendees for the first time since 2019.

The much-anticipated return of the event in September was themed around 'Wood, Water & Innovation: Building Resilience in Rural Environments', hosting expert speakers and representative from across the breadth of the forestry industry in Greta to discuss futureproofing considerations.

The FEG evolved from within the Institute of Agricultural Engineers (IAGrE) in 1989 with a committee formed to represent various aspects of Forest Engineering. In the 36 years that have followed, FEG has become a network facilitating knowledge exchange on rural infrastructure and professional development for individuals throughout the sector.

With the needs of forestry and timber ventures ever-evolving, events like the FEG Symposium are a crucial part of staying connected to the latest

innovations and new practices emerging in the industry.

"In the last 10 years, things have changed so much," noted IAGrE CEO Charlie Nicklin, nodding to the James Jones & Sons Ltd electric timber truck parked outside as an example. "That is not something you would have seen, even just five years ago."

The first talk of the day came from Professor Dan Ridley-Ellis, Edinburgh Napier University, looking at the issue of alternative tree species for productive forestry.

There are many reasons to think about using a greater range of tree species for providing the wood that society needs, not least because of a changing climate and tree health concerns around current staples of timber resource. Our requirements for wood products are likely to look very different in the future to what they are today and so we have to plan now for what those needs may be.

Part of the issue in diversifying species choice is that current methods of timber grading lend to a bias towards certain

species. Dan urged that we should "start talking about 'useful timber'" to change mindsets and put wood properties into context.

"There is no single such thing as 'quality timber,'" he stated, clarifying that in practical terms, the definition changes depending on multiple factors beyond classification indicators. Actual wood properties vary by species, growth conditions and more.

This means that we cannot rely on historic data, or that from outside the UK. However, despite ongoing efforts to test and prioritise alternative tree species, there is a huge gap in research capacity.

With data comes options but decisions need to be made now to determine what wood we will have in the future.

We also heard from Anna Cuanalo MICE, ARUP Group, and Felix Merry, Natural Resources Wales (NRW), about the issues arising around sustainable drainage systems (SuDS) legislation and application.

The Welsh Government committed to addressing surface water flooding

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NEWS & UPDATES

and to look at achieving broader well-being goals by implementing Schedule 3 of the Flood and Water Management Act 2010 in January 2019. As a result, there is a requirement for consent from the SuDS Approval Body (SAB) prior to commencing large construction projects, including forest road or quarry works.

This is a complex topic, owing largely to the fact SuDS was originally designed for urban environments, rather than a rural context. The lack of suitable adjustment for different land uses has led to compliance issues and significant project delays.

"Adjusting for SuDS takes a massive amount of time," said Felix. "Harvesting on some of our client sites has been pushed back three or four years."

He warned that the forestry exceptions that have been carried through in some cases should not be considered as a precedent and are unlikely to continue as the push for SuDS gains traction.

Inconsistent application of the rules has also been a cause for confusion. As Anna pointed out, SABs fall under individual councils and as Wales is the only UK nation enforcing statutory SuDS standards, there are divergent practices across borders.

She pointed to opportunities in a holistic landscape approach more suited to context-dependent requirements. A review of standards in Wales will hopefully enable future adaptation and inform similar requirements taking shape in England and Scotland.

Iwan Lloyd Williams MLCfor, Forestry Consultant and Forest Industry Safety Accord (FISA) Board Member, talked through FISA 808 - CDM in Relation to Forestry. The document provides a summary for the Construction Design & Management (CDM) Regulations 2015 and how they apply to forestry-related



construction work.

"Compliance isn't complicated," Iwan stressed. "Health and safety doesn't need to be complicated if we do what we say we should be doing."

Chris Watson, Woodland Resilience Advisor for Forestry Commission, spoke about the broader context of what 'resilience' means for productive forestry. It has become a buzzword but effectively just means ensuring our forests and woodlands can continue to provide what we need in the face of pressures like climate change, pests, diseases and ecological decline.

"Think about resilience as a cycle, as a process," he explained. "It doesn't stay static. Something we're all able to withstand now might cause problems in the future. It's a constant adaptation process. We've got to monitor and learn."

Practical steps include species diversification, as covered by Dan, adopting alternative silvicultural systems, embedding rapid response infrastructure and natural defence in forest design, and prioritisation of biosecurity measures.

An example of adapting a practice for long-lasting durability came from

Forestry and Land Scotland's Graeme White, who covered how and why timber deck forestry bridges are being replaced by precast concrete units. Though controversial on the surface, timber decks are proving unable to cope with weather conditions and increasingly heavy loads on multiple sites.

The day closed with Douglas Clark, Chair and Director of Clark Engineering, presenting 100 years of engineering innovation at the company. Since 1924, they have been a major supplier of bespoke machinery to forestry and beyond, growing to a global player in niche engineering solutions in four generations of the family.

Jock McKie presented Douglas with the FEG Award for services to the industry.

The overarching theme of the day was that the forestry industry has to be willing to try new and different things to find solutions for tomorrow. However, taking that chance is often risky and expensive.

Clark Engineering's ethos of design, innovation and creation was a timely example of adapting to not just survive, but thrive.



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Showcasing Green Careers at Glasgow University

The Confor team joined Alba Trees, James Jones & Sons and Scottish Woodlands Ltd at the University of Glasgow in September to share green career opportunities in forestry with students. **Richard Hunter** reports.

Green careers 'directly tackle climate change and have a positive impact on the environment'. This is the government definition and can be interpreted in many ways, but the whole forestry and timber sector easily classifies as green.

It was on this basis that Confor agreed to support the Scottish Ecological Design Association (SEDA) FutureFest: Green Careers Fair at the University of Glasgow (UoG). The event attracted students in the hundreds with a small number of college groups.

This was more than just a Confor team effort; Alba Trees, James Jones & Sons and Scottish Woodlands Ltd all provided people and props which stimulated conversations. As a result, we were able to showcase the 'seed to sawn' supply chain for students.

Cell grown trees provided a starting point, covering elements such as peat-free growing media and tree breeding. Forest management techniques followed, including drone use and GIS mapping. Finally, our stand was kitted out with different examples of timber use, such as JJI-Joists and Glulam.

With Galbraith also exhibiting at the stand next over, forestry had an overall healthy presence.

Many students picked up on our Confor 'Find A Career in Forestry' banner, which lists different pathways into the industry, and wanted more information. We were able to point them towards resources they were previously unaware of, particularly science and research opportunities.

It appears that universities have



picked up on the trend of students to look outside of the traditional job hunting grounds. As such the conversations ranged from the expected forest management and contracting, to timber and forest economics (both UK and globally) and social sciences. One conversation in particular amused me; the student clearly had little knowledge of timber supply and was set on asking questions that would give answers he liked.

Basically, along the lines of 'is there really any future in forestry and timber?'.

Needless to say, he left knowing there is indeed a very strong future in forestry, both in the UK and globally (as the conversation headed overseas). This shows that we still have a lot of work to do in myth busting to prevent fake news and bad publicity in the future.

Several of the conversations led not directly to careers but to dissertation research and if a student is including forestry in their dissertation, that is a win as it can easily lead to a career in the field.

For the second part of the event,

we hosted a workshop on woodland creation based on the 'Forest in the Landscape' activity created by Forest Research. It consists of a large striking board and tangible pieces to let players place trees where they think a new woodland should be created.

Players are asked a series of quick questions about their woodland and its impact on the surrounding landscape, and a score is generated based on their placements.

The game was useful for drawing in students who might not have started the day thinking about forestry but certainly left the room with it firmly on their minds.

Attending such a large University also gave us the chance to talk to people with diverse backgrounds we don't see many of in forestry. The majority of students we spoke to did not have rural upbringings but were able to see the benefits that forestry brought to the environment.

The Forestry Skills Forum (England and Wales) has an EDI group focused on tackling this problem and it seems that universities could be a key part of the solution.

DELIVERING FOR PROGRESS

Progress of the National Wood Strategy for England has been reviewed by the England Forestry Industry Leadership Group. A summary of completed and ongoing actions has been provided by **John Bruce**, Confor National Manager for England.

The National Wood Strategy for England (NWSE) sets out priority actions for England's forest and wood-based industries – in collaboration with government, non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and professional membership organisations – to increase the growing, harvesting and production of timber in England.

Despite ongoing policy uncertainty and the backdrop of a general election year, funding uncertainties and public sector spending reviews, considerable progress has been made on the main NWSE goals.

Goal 1: Stabilise and then increase the timber resource in England.

Government continues to communicate the ILG aim of increasing conifer planting to at least 30%, which will triple current conifer planting levels, and the intention to bring more hardwoods to market.

The Timber in Construction Roadmap was re-launched in February 2025, committing this government to continuing our collaboration with industry to increase the use and application of timber products and systems in construction.

Mary Creagh CBE MP, Minister for Nature, is actively engaging with the forestry, wood processing and timber construction sectors to understand the challenges and opportunities.

A Tree Planting Taskforce has been established to support tree planting across the UK, bringing together Ministers from all four nations, government officials and the country forestry authorities, as well as guest stakeholders, including Confor.

Confor and other industry representatives continue to raise the need for continued Government support for productive forestry, including through the Land Use Framework consultation.

To enhance the England Woodland Creation Offer (EWCO), Forestry Commission launched the Woodland Creation Fast Track (WCFT) and associated Low Sensitivity Land Payment (LSLP) in early 2024. In the first year, 12% of all EWCO applications were processed as WCFT, over 90% of which received an agreement offer within the 12-week guideline.

Defra is exploring options to streamline the regulatory process for woodland creation and felling, whilst maintaining protections for trees and the wider environment.

There is still work ongoing in areas such as developing a 'Timber Sector Deal', woodland resiliency and species diversification, and implementing further support for improved squirrel and deer management.

Goal 2: Exceed the Government's statutory target for tree and woodland cover.

The statutory target is to reach 16.5% canopy cover by 2050, with over 5,000 ha of new planting in 2024/25.

The latter was achieved, with 5,770 hectares planted in 2024/25, an increase of more than 25% on 2023/24 figures. Planting of fast-growing conifers was up by 58%, from 430 hectares to 680 hectares for the same period.

This is the highest level of planting in England since 1989, and expectations are high for continued momentum.

The enhanced EWCO will play a significant role in incentivising woodland creation on farms. Fast-track and digital approvals are improving efficiency, while the removal of credit checks at the application stage have improved accessibility.

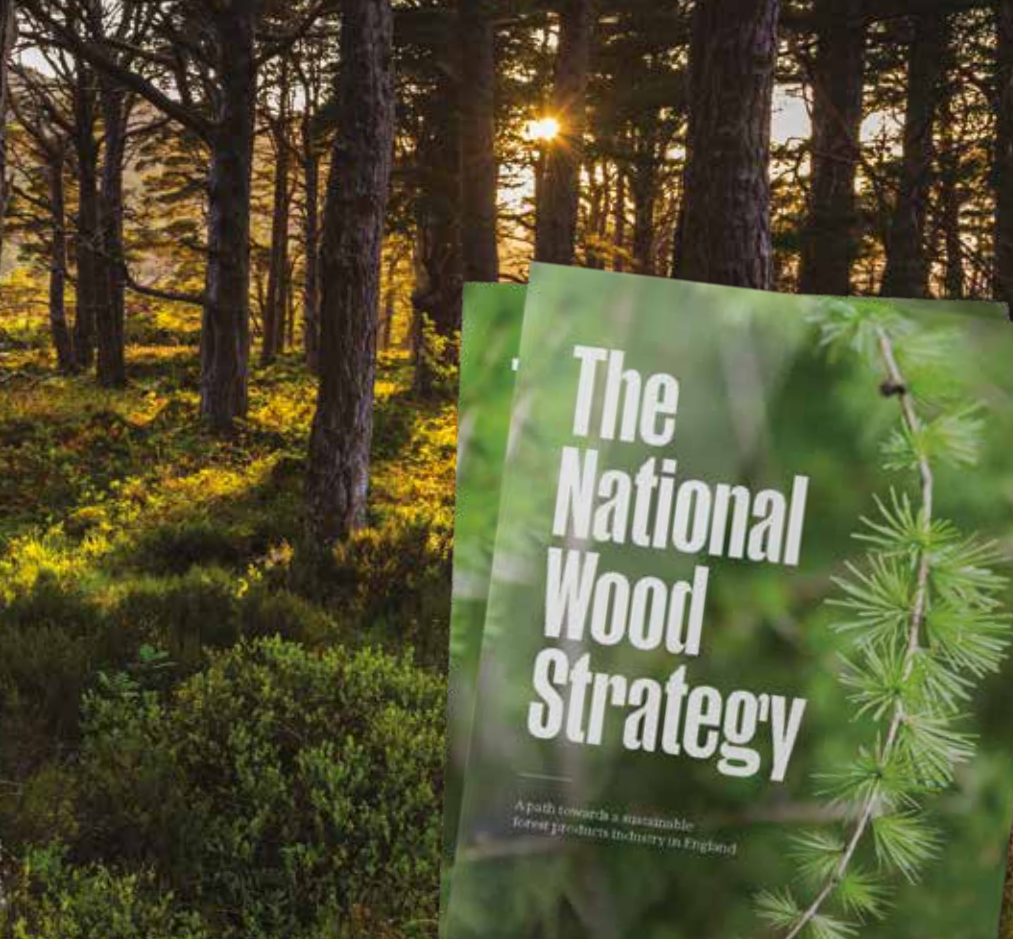
Forestry Commission have also taken action to move delayed schemes forward and applications that have been in the system for over a year are being reviewed.

To address the capacity and structure of the seed supply and nursery sector, Defra's Nature for Climate Fund made £18 million available between 2021/22 and 2024/25 in domestic nursery capacity through the Tree Production Innovation Fund, Tree Production Capital Grant and Seed Sourcing Grant.

Goal 3: Increase the use and lifespan of English wood

The Forestry Commission Trees to Timber campaign was a key indicator in





tone shift for productive forestry in England. It raised awareness of the importance of timber as a UK-grown product and highlighted the benefits of developing commercial timber enterprises, spotlighting areas where innovation is happening to address current and future threats.

However, formal policy support remains limited.

Government committed to explore the use of Government Buying Standards to encourage use of sustainable low carbon building materials, such as timber. This has the potential to increase public procurement of homegrown timber.

It is hoped that Grown in Britain being accepted as meeting Category A status under the Government's Timber Procurement Policy will remove longstanding barriers to the use of British-certified timber in government procurement and major construction projects.

Additionally, the Nature for Climate Fund's Woods into Management Forestry Innovation Funds allocated £2.3m for 14 projects to support the innovative development of timber products and systems using British timber.

The Wood Recyclers Association and their members continue to seek greater recovery and re-use of post use wood in long life products such as wood panels.

Government established the Circular Economy Taskforce in November 2024 to support the creation of a Circular Economy Strategy for England. The strategy will set out how England can

transition to a circular economy that will protect our environment, secure valuable resources, and maximise the value extracted from the things we use.

The built environment will be one of six initial sector roadmaps that will accompany the strategy. It will build on the end-of-life considerations and resource circularity within the Timber in Construction Roadmap.

Goal 4: Create a predictable and consistent investment environment

Defra are engaging with industry to identify the barriers and market failures and opportunities for productive forestry as an attractive investment opportunity.

Confor has established an Investor Forum and a package of proposals aimed at unlocking £0.5bn of private investment in commercial forestry is in development.

Defra are also scoping research into private finance and tree planting as part of the final NCF Tree Planting evaluation and scoping potential research into the economics of alternative silvicultural practices for different management objectives, including timber production.

Government will seek views on how to encourage private investment in nature from the sectors which impact and rely upon the natural environment, including investment in timber, in a forthcoming call for evidence.

Goal 5: Develop a consistent and positive message on productive woodland

Confor and wider industry public communications continue to support myth-busting and evidence-sharing through newsletters and the Forestry & Wood Hub. Strategic messaging is increasingly aligned with the Timber in Construction Roadmap.

In addition to Trees to Timber, there have been a number of other campaigns since the launch of the NWSE that have aimed to promote woodland creation and forestry:

- **Case for Trees:** Demonstrates the multiple benefits of tree planting for landowners, highlighting how well-managed woodlands can deliver broader environmental and economic gains.
- **Put Down Roots:** Shows how farmers or land managers in England can apply for a tree planting grant and reap the rewards of incorporating trees into their land now and for years to come.
- **Your Career in Forestry:** Supports and promotes forestry careers, both to strengthen the wider sector and to develop and maintain a highly skilled workforce.
- **Woods and Carbon:** Demystifies the carbon process, raised awareness among land managers and owners, and encouraged sign-ups for the Woodland Carbon Guarantee auction.

Crucially, Confor has re-established the All-Party Parliamentary Group for Forestry and Timber Security for ongoing political engagement.

Goal 6: Develop a skilled workforce

The Forestry Sector Skills Plan 2025 – 2035 for England has been published with input from industry and government and sets out the opportunities and barriers facing the forestry sector workforce in England. It includes actions, funded by Forestry Commission and matching and in-kind contributions from forestry organisations to improve recruitment into the forestry workforce, alongside measures to raise the profile of forestry careers.

Industry representatives are proactively engaged in the Forestry Skills Forum and its various activities. The new Sector Skills Plan clearly illustrates a collaborative approach to addressing future skills and recruitment challenges.

Finally, the Forestry Training Service UK has now been launched, with four years of funding secured and an Operations Director in post.

New tree species list aims to future-proof Scotland's forests

A Future Productive Species List of trees to be prioritised in Scotland has been published following extensive research into resilience, biodiversity and timber quality.

A new list of 28 tree species for foresters to grow in the future marks a major step forward in helping Scotland's forests adapt to the growing threats of climate change.

The list has been developed through extensive collaboration between Scottish Forestry, Forest Research, and a wide range of partners from across the forestry, conservation, and rural sectors.

The trees chosen span a diverse mix of species and have been carefully assessed against strict scientific criteria to ensure they can withstand changing conditions while continuing to deliver economic, environmental, and community benefits.

Speaking during Scotland's Climate Week, Rural Affairs Secretary Mairi Gougeon welcomed the publication of the list, saying: "We've seen the very stark global effects of climate change with hotter and drier summers and

warmer wetter winters. We must future-proof our forests for the future to ensure that they thrive and continue to provide multiple benefits.

"This new list isn't just about timber production – which in itself is vital – it's about ensuring our woodlands can survive in a future climate. Our woodlands also need to support biodiversity, lock up carbon, and provide the social and recreational and environmental benefits that communities value so highly."

Helen Sellars, Scottish Forestry's Head of Sustainable Forest Management, said that the highlighted trees should give the sector confidence about which species are best to invest in for the future.

Andy Leitch, Deputy Chief Executive of Confor commented: "Confor welcomes the findings of the Scottish Forestry led exercise identifying



The Future Productive Species List includes 14 conifers and 14 broadleaves and are not ranked in any order of importance:

BROADLEAVES

- **Alder** Common (*Alnus glutinosa*)
- **Aspen** (*Populus tremula*) and Hybrid (*Populus tremula x tremuloides*)
- **Beech** (*Fagus sylvatica*)
- **Birch** – Downy (*Betula pubescens*)
- **Birch** – Silver (*Betula pendula*)
- **Chestnut** – Sweet (*Castanea sativa*)
- **Gean** (*Prunus avium*)
- **Hornbeam** (*Carpinus betulus*)
- **Lime** – Small-Leaved (*Tilia Cordata*)
- **Maple** – Norway (*Acer platanoides*)

- **Oak** – Pedunculate (*Quercus robur*)
- **Oak** – Red (*Quercus rubra*)
- **Oak** – Sessile (*Quercus petraea*)
- **Sycamore** (*Acer pseudoplatanus*)

CONIFERS

- **Cedar** – Japanese (*Cryptomeria japonica*)
- **Cedar** – Western Red (*Thuja plicata*)
- **Fir** – Douglas (*Pseudotsuga menziesii*)
- **Fir** – European Silver (*Abies alba*)
- **Fir** – Grand (*Abies grandis*)

- **Fir** – Noble (*Abies procera*)
- **Fir** – Pacific Silver (*Abies amabilis*)
- **Hemlock** – Western (*Tsuga heterophylla*)
- **Pine** – Lodgepole (*Pinus contorta* var. *latifolia*)
- **Pine** – Macedonian (*Pinus peuce*)
- **Pine** – Scots (*Pinus sylvestris*)
- **Redwood** – Coast (*Sequoia sempervirens*)
- **Spruce** – Norway (*Picea abies*)
- **Spruce** – Sitka (*Picea sitchensis*)





potential future productive tree species accounting for changing growing conditions due to climate change.

“We look forward to working with others over the coming years to ensure these species can produce the volume and quality of timber required to meet future market demands in Scotland and beyond.”

The list encourages a broader mix of tree species and silviculture and supports the recent change to 65% maximum one species in the UK Forestry Standard. Key species that underpin the industry and meet the criteria are still needed as part of the woodland mix.

Scottish Forestry commissioned experts from Forest Research to gather the scientific evidence to support the selection of trees. In total, over 100 datasets were compiled and analysed in thorough detail and more than 100 experts and industry leaders were involved in pulling together the work.

Dr David Edwards, who led a team of 30 experts from Forest Research to carry out the scientific assessment of candidate tree species, said: “We believe this is the most comprehensive assessment of tree species’ performance ever conducted in the UK and will provide a focus for research and development, helping shape Scotland’s forests for years to come.

“Essential to compiling the list was close collaboration with numerous forestry experts and managers from across the sector to capture their knowledge and experience.”

The new tree species list will continue to evolve as evidence grows, ensuring that it remains a living tool to guide woodland managers well into the future.

The work to produce a list of trees for the future stems from the Routemap to Resilience, published in March 2025, which set out a strategic direction for building woodlands that are more adaptable, sustainable, and capable of supporting both Scotland’s economy and its environment.

The Routemap also sets out the actions to be taken to invest in the development of these species to increase availability and use, such as seed supply and end use.

FISA Summit 2025: Risk Zones Campaign Claims Centre Stage

The FISA Summit was confirmed a roaring success the moment attendees voted to hold the event on an annual basis, much to the delight of all involved.

The 2025 Summit, held in Penrith on 17 September, saw approximately 90 forest industry professionals gather from across the country to participate in the launch of a year-long Risk Zone campaign and learn how FISA has progressed in improving the safety of the forest industry.

Risk Zones campaign

The FISA Risk Zone campaign initiative will address the ever-growing problem of public and operative encroachment into active forestry work areas, tackling multiple risk zone safety hazards including tree felling, heavy machinery risks, haulage, and chainshot incidents.

It will be driven by four blocks of work:

- **Block 1:** Call to industry to better respect and adhere to risk zones.
- **Block 2:** Industry guidance, including a monthly rollout and relaunch for site signage.
- **Block 3:** Call to training providers to include Risk Zones in training events.
- **Block 4:** Call to manufacturers, dealers and others in the industry to help to share messaging.

The Risk Zone campaign aims to prevent accidents through education and clear communication about the invisible danger zones surrounding forestry operations. Response to the launch was overwhelmingly positive, with attendees expressing strong support

for this coordinated approach to safety messaging.

FISA Safety Award launched

The Summit also introduced the new FISA Safety Award, with nominations open until December 2025. This initiative recognises excellence in forestry safety practices and celebrates individuals demonstrating outstanding commitment to forest safety.

Those wishing to nominate a candidate for the award should contact admin@ukfisa.com.

FISA Working Groups drive progress

In addition to updates from Wayne Owen of the HSE, the audience heard comprehensive reports from FISA's working groups, showcasing the breadth of safety initiatives underway across the industry.

Key developments include the Chainsaw Group's review of FISA 302 and 310 guidance documents and the Electrical & Utilities Group rolling out awareness presentations and Technical Notes.

The Forest Works Manager Group is making significant progress reviewing the FWM framework and developing crucial roadside working guidance for traffic management and HGV accommodation.

The Plant & Equipment Group is encouraging participation from site-based

workers and is refreshing the FISA 701 ATV guide while planning future work on drone safety, refreshing the chipper and debogging guidance, and advising on machine fire extinguishers.

Meanwhile, the Landowner Group is developing a series of outreach films explaining the roles involved in the planning and managing of timber harvesting operations, in collaboration with other Working Groups.

A recurring theme during the Summit was recognition of the 160+ volunteers contributing their forestry expertise to support FISA's working groups, balancing their FISA commitments with demanding day jobs.

FISA welcomes input from all disciplines and continues to seek volunteers from across the industry.

Roadside Working as a priority

A recent significant FISA development is the establishment of a dedicated Roadside Working Task & Finish Group responding to ongoing industry concerns about safety protocols for operations adjacent to public highways. The group is developing comprehensive guidance covering risk assessment, traffic management protocols, and specific provisions for haulage operations.

Future plans

The Summit concluded with forward-looking priorities for 2026, including a planned refresh of Guidance on Managing Health & Safety in Forestry (GMHSF) and asserting its legal position. The Learning & Behaviour Group is planning a spring 2026 workshop on behavioural safety while scoping a potential FISA contractor compliance and support system.

The Worksite Working Group has several guidance documents in progress, including a CDM Technical Note supporting FISA 808, refreshed FISA 803 renamed 'Wildfires', and new public safety management guidance FISA 809.

The 2025 FISA Summit demonstrated the forest industry's commitment to continuous safety improvement through collaboration and shared expertise. Ongoing FISA working group activities ensure safety standards evolve with industry needs while the Risk Zone campaign will remind both operatives and the public about the dangers of forest machine risk zone encroachment.

Success depends on continued industry participation and volunteer involvement. FISA will continue to lead by example in protecting both the industry's workforce and the public who enjoy our forests.



James Jones & Sons Ltd celebrate 25-year milestone of Lockerbie site

The landscape of the Stevens Croft site and the shape of timber processing in Southwest Scotland were transformed 25 years ago with the construction of Lockerbie 1, the original James Jones & Sons pallet mill.

Today, the same site now employs around 200 direct employees from the local area.

Rob MacKenna, General Manager of James Jones & Sons Ltd, said: "This is a major milestone for the site, and the images offer a striking comparison between 1999 and 2025 and highlight the scale of the site's growth and the extensive programmes of capital expenditure and innovation.

"Since the site's inception we have invested over £100 million and produced around 6 million m³ of sawn timber.

"We are delighted to celebrate our anniversary, and it stands as a testament to the dedication, hard work and innovation of everyone involved over the years. Recognition is due too to the visionaries on the Board at the time to build on a greenfield site."



Lantra launches new campaign to address trend in chainsaw accidents

Lantra, the leading organisation for careers, skills, and qualifications in the land-based and environment sector has launched a new campaign highlighting the critical importance of chainsaw safety.

The campaign aims to educate the public and professionals that chainsaws are not just another piece of garden equipment but are potentially lethal power tools that demand proper training and personal protective equipment (PPE).

As chainsaws become more accessible through low-cost supermarkets, online retailers and DIY stores, there has been a worryingly increasing trend of accidents relating to improper use. A freedom of information request to NHS hospitals

in England, Wales, and Scotland shows that 3,144 people have attended A&E departments due to a chainsaw related injury in the last 10 years, with the trend increasing since 2020.

'Respect the chainsaw', the new campaign from Lantra, sets out to dispel myths, raise awareness, and promote essential safety measures.

Speaking about the new campaign, Clegg Bamber MBE, Head of Communications at Lantra, said: "We know that chainsaws can cause life-changing injuries within a split second. Sadly, sometimes these injuries become fatal. Our message to all people who operate a chainsaw today, or in the future, is chainsaws are dangerous machines, training on

how to use them is essential, and PPE is non-negotiable."

Lantra have released a 'Respect the chainsaw' film highlighting the importance of training and information on how to use a saw safely. Led by James Bingham, a qualified arborist summarises the dangers of the chainsaw, and emphasises understanding how a chainsaw works, how to use the saw properly, including the risk of kickback, and exploring how protective clothing comes into effect should it connect with a chainsaw.

Whether pruning a tree in the garden, clearing a fallen tree from the driveway or working in a professional environment, the campaign underlines that safety must come first.

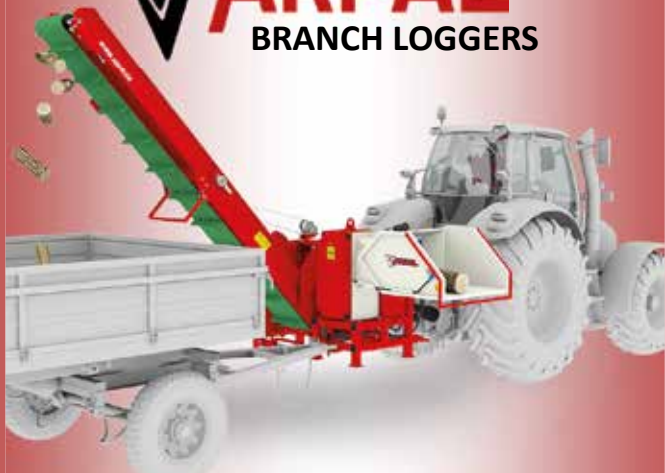


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Homegrown timber setting the standard at construction of new NMITE facility

Modern timber construction methods being employed at a new NMITE campus centre will inform both research and education outcome.

Construction is underway at NMITE's Centre for Innovation and Future Skills (CIFS), with base plates installed and the timber frame newly erected. Due to be opened in Spring 2026, this is a significant milestone in the construction of the building located on NMITE's Blackfriars Campus.

The new centre will include 180 square metres of new space and will renovate 90 square metres of an unused part of the existing Edwardian building. The plan is to create a very flexible building consisting of exhibition areas, multiuse workspace, seminar rooms, and informal social spaces.

A hybrid glue-laminated timber (glulam) beam made from UK grown timber has also been installed as part of a project led by NMITE's Centre for Advanced Timber Technology (CATT) and Edinburgh Napier University (ENU).

'Building from England's Woodlands', funded through the Forestry Commission's Timber in Construction Innovation Fund, examines the suitability of certain species of English homegrown trees for their use in construction, looking at sawn, engineered, and mass timber products like cross-laminated timber (CLT) and glulam.

The construction project offers a perfect opportunity to demonstrate the viability of homegrown timber in modern construction methods. Drones will be used to capture overhead footage of this stage of the NMITE build with timelapse from the camera already mounted on site.

NMITE and ENU will use the live retrofit and extension project at Blackfriars to develop a practical methodology for measuring the impact of the new structure on the existing form. The challenge will create an education workshop template that can be applied to other building typologies to upskill and inform retrofit approaches.

"It will probably come as no surprise



that we will be using this new build as part of our education model," said Anthea Parker, NMITE's Director of Strategic Projects and Change. "This will provide students on our new Construction Management degree which starts in September with real, hands-on learning opportunities."

CIFS has been expertly designed by local firm Arbor Architects and will be brought to life by local timber construction company, Firth Construction, with other members of the team including project management firm Greenwood Projects, mechanical

and electrical designers VIDA, structural designers Giraffe Engineering and landscape designers Seed Landscape Design.

NMITE is no stranger to creating new, award-winning buildings as exemplified by the Skylon campus which has won Construction Excellence regional and national accolades for best value and social value, respectively. Once built, CIFS will become home to NMITE's Innovation Support Programme, delivered in partnership with Innovate UK, as well as other courses and programmes.



LEADING SAWMILLERS UNITE WITH CONFOR TO CHAMPION UK TIMBER

BSW Timber, James Jones & Sons and Glennon Brothers are delighted to announce the establishment of a unique partnership, as they join forces to promote UK timber and reduce reliance on imported materials.

In an industry first, the UK's three largest sawmillers – BSW Timber, James Jones & Sons, and Glennon Brothers – have joined forces in a landmark collaboration to promote the use of domestically grown and manufactured timber.

Backed by leading trade bodies Confor (Confederation of Forest Industries) and Timber Development UK (TDUK), the initiative is a call to action for a more sustainable, economically sound future for the UK construction sector.

Despite the UK having a world-class sawmilling industry, it is the second-largest net importer of forest products globally, with 80% – worth £9 billion – of its requirements imported annually.

This over-reliance on imported timber not only weakens our domestic industry, but also undermines environmental progress, contributes to unnecessary carbon emissions, and reduces the potential for rural job creation.

Promoting C16 Timber: A homegrown solution

At the heart of the campaign is C16 graded timber – grown and manufactured in the UK. C16 is suitable for most standard construction applications, offering strength, versatility, and lower embodied carbon than many imported alternatives, such as C24 timber.

It is a renewable, biophilic material that supports wellbeing and contributes

positively to the built environment, which currently accounts for around 25% of the UK's carbon emissions.

This collaboration supports the UK Government's Timber in Construction Roadmap and aligns with national goals for decarbonisation, economic growth, and forestry expansion.

A four-step approach: Grow, manufacture, specify and build

The joint campaign lays out a clear strategy for progress:

- **GROW:** Increase tree planting, and replanting, to ensure the growth of productive woodlands in the UK, securing future timber supply and boosting carbon sequestration, biodiversity, and air and water quality.

What is C16?

When structural engineers do calculations to confirm that a building is safe, they need some numbers for the properties of the materials – such as strength, stiffness and density.

To make this easy, many construction materials are referred to by means of things commonly called classes or grades. This includes structural timber, and the name 'C16' is a convenient way of describing these key design properties.

Structural timber that is strength graded as C16 has suitable mechanical properties for many kinds of load-bearing timber construction. Back in 2000, the Building Research Establishment (BRE) demonstrated the potential for C16 with the TF 2000 Project – a six-storey light timber frame building. The last quarter of a century has seen many other practical demonstrations of what can be achieved with C16 – both commercial and experimental.

What is the difference between C16 and C24?

The structural timber strength classes C16 and C24 are the ones most familiar

on the UK market. C24 is a slightly higher grade than C16, with slightly higher design values. This means that it might be possible to use a smaller piece of timber in the building when using C24 compared to C16.

However, often the timber sizes are governed by other factors, and the strength class makes little difference. If the size of a timber member is determined by something else – for example, the thickness of insulation needed in a wall – and the design calculations work with C16, there is no grade advantage to using C24.

These days, imported timber tends to be C24 and home-grown timber tends to be C16.

What do strength grades say about timber quality?

Strength classes give information about the forces timber can safely carry, and how much it will deflect under those forces. These are important for ensuring that buildings can safely stand without issue.

Timber is graded by visual grading rules, or by machine grading measurements. However, these criteria are not strongly linked to the design properties and do not describe durability.

- **MANUFACTURE:** Capitalise on advanced harvesting and sawmilling technology to maximise the value of UK timber, helping to sustainably decarbonise the construction sector.
- **SPECIFY:** Encourage architects, engineers, and contractors to specify C16 timber more frequently, reducing dependency on higher-carbon materials like concrete, steel and imported alternatives.
- **BUILD:** Leverage the full capabilities of C16 timber across construction, delivering cost-effective, sustainable solutions that also support the economy and rural employment.

A united industry for a resilient future

The three sawmillers, who collectively produce the vast majority of the UK's C16 sawn timber, are working with Confor to support an industry-wide rebalancing of supply chains, focussing on domestic timber production to help futureproof the UK's timber requirements.

Speaking on the collaboration, Stuart Goodall, Chief Executive at Confor, said: "Global demand for timber is projected

to rise significantly given its low-carbon benefits. If the UK wants a secure, consistent, and sustainable supply of timber material, now is the time to invest in our industry.



scan for more info



c16info@confor.org.uk

"Confor supports this collaboration as an important initiative to highlight how working together as an industry is key to securing the long-term future of UK timber."

Mary Creagh CBE, Minister for Nature, said: "Our Plan for Change is focussed on creating new, green jobs, planting more trees, increasing access to nature and reducing carbon emissions.

"We currently import 80% of the timber we use and that needs to change.

"Our Timber in Construction Roadmap and the C16 campaign will boost the use of UK timber to help build the homes and schools we need faster and more sustainably."

Through joint advocacy, public engagement, and cross-industry alignment, this campaign represents a pivotal step in creating a stronger, greener future using one of the UK's most underutilised natural assets: our forests.



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War against tree beetle sees eradications around England

Actions to eradicate and prevent the spread of the eight-toothed spruce bark beetle have been proven effective with the reported elimination of the pest at all identified 2021 outbreak sites.



The UK government's world-leading Ips typographus eradication programme has successfully eliminated the eight-toothed spruce bark beetle from all outbreak sites in England that were identified in 2021.

The tree beetle is a serious pest of spruce trees in Europe and was first identified in the UK in 2018. It prefers stressed or dying trees but, under the right conditions, can attack healthy trees.

Successful elimination at the 13 outbreak sites follows three years of monitoring on site for beetle presence, gathering data and carrying out regular surveillance to determine eradication and prevent the establishment of breeding beetles. This illustrates that the policy approach and operational activity led by the Forestry Commission and Forest Research is proving successful in limiting the risk of the pest establishing in the UK.

If left unmanaged, the pest could significantly threaten Great Britain's forestry and timber industries, putting an estimated 725,000 hectares of spruce, with a value of £2.9 billion, at risk of infestation and damage.

Defra Chief Plant Health Officer Professor Nicola Spence said: "We are very encouraged by the fact that our world-leading programme has successfully eradicated the eight-

toothed spruce bark beetle from 2021 outbreak sites.

"We are seeing with a changing climate an ever-increasing risk from pests and diseases and it requires a huge effort by the Plant Health Service to manage outbreaks."

Continued vigilance is urged, particularly as a new very small outbreak was identified during continued surveillance activity in Lincolnshire in July.

Forestry Commission Director of Forest Services Dr Anna Brown said: "The success of our eradication and monitoring programme shows that we are managing to keep this pest from establishing in England, but this takes a huge amount of effort and the continued support of the woodland and forestry sector.

"Spruce is important for our current timber security, and it is vital that we remain vigilant, especially with this warm weather which results in a heightened risk of trees becoming stressed and more vulnerable to pest and disease threats. There is no evidence of spread within the UK, but all landowners and land managers should continue to check the health of spruce trees on their land."

Current evidence suggests outbreaks are the results from blow over of the pest from the European mainland where

Ips is endemic. There is no evidence of spread – or of impacts on healthy spruce – in the UK.

Woodland managers, landowners and the forestry sector are urged to remain on guard, and to continue to comply with ongoing restrictions for movement of spruce material and methods of forest operations in the Demarcated Area.

Any sightings of the eight-toothed spruce bark beetle should be reported immediately via Forest Research's Tree Alert portal to help reduce the risk of the pest spreading.

Volunteers across Great Britain who have spruce growing in woodland that they own or manage have been invited to take part in a national monitoring project managed by Forest Research, Forestry Commission and the Sylva Foundation. Participants will become part of an early warning system by installing Ips typographus pheromone traps in their woodlands and monitoring samples.

Additionally, a new Spruce Site Assessment grant has been launched to support landowners through the process of removing susceptible spruce from the highest risk areas in England. This will help landowners to evaluate their spruce trees, estimate felling costs and plan for early removal before potential infestations.

Legal matters

Land Reform (Scotland) Bill: Stage 2 amendments and implications for woodland creation in Scotland

Graeme Leith, Partner at Brodies LLP, summarises the potential impact of the latest version of the Land Reform (Scotland) Bill on woodland owners.

The Land Reform (Scotland) Bill ("the Bill") completed Stage 2 of the legislative process on 24 June 2025. Following this evidence gathering stage conducted by the Net Zero, Energy and Transport Committee of the Scottish Parliament, a revised version of the Bill was issued.

While the Bill makes no distinction between forestry and other rural land, its provisions could have specific consequences for owners of larger forests in Scotland and parties who are seeking to invest in woodland creation projects.

In particular, the increased focus on community engagement, requirement for land management plans and the impact of lotting rules and enhanced community rights to buy have potential to create additional hurdles for those seeking to create or expand woodlands within large landholdings, and to complicate sale transactions involving such land.

Community engagement and land management plans

The Bill introduces a legally binding concept of land management plans for landholdings over a certain size, albeit the detail will be included in regulations produced after the Bill becomes legislation. The regulations require owners of large landholdings to prepare and maintain a publicly available land management plan ("the Plan"), setting out intentions for land use and sale.

After Stage 2, the threshold size of landholdings which will be subject to these regulations has been reduced from 3,000 hectares to 1,000 hectares. This means that

more properties, including larger forests, will now be brought into the scope and will be required to prepare and maintain a Plan.

Contiguous or neighbouring areas of land (within 250 metres lateral distance) owned by the same party or connected parties will be aggregated for the purpose of determining whether there is a large landholding.

Landowners will be under a duty to engage with communities during the preparation of the Plan and to state how such community engagement has informed the content of the Plan. The detail will be contained in regulations but as far as woodland creation is concerned, there would appear to be potential for community groups to influence a landowner's woodland creation ambitions through this process.

Extended opportunities for communities to register interests in land

The Bill also seeks to place a prohibition on the sale of a large landholding - or any part of it - without first notifying Scottish Ministers of the proposed sale. There will be a minimum area threshold that has still to be defined but is

expected to be a relatively low threshold.

The procedure is designed to provide community bodies with an opportunity to register an interest to acquire that land. The marketing or negotiated sale process will effectively be put on hold until a community group that meets the relevant criteria has had an opportunity to acquire the sale area at market value, and the Bill sets out the various stages within that process.

For investors with a requirement to deploy funds quickly and looking to acquire forests or land for woodland creation from estates over 1,000 hectares, these provisions could result in longer sales processes and increased uncertainty, potentially making Scottish forestry investments less attractive compared to other asset classes.

Lotting

In terms of the lotting provisions in the Bill, it is for the Scottish Ministers to decide whether a large landholding should be sold as a whole or whether it should be sold in lots.

When making a lotting decision, the Scottish Ministers must assess whether dividing the sales area into lots would be more likely to result in the land being used in a way which better serves the public interest and enhances the sustainability of the local community.

The Scottish Ministers are required to make a lotting decision within six months from the date on which an application is received. Any failure to comply with this timeframe will not affect the validity of the decision. No sale can proceed until the process has been completed.

As with the extended rights for community rights to buy, there is potential for this lotting process to delay and complicate sales of areas that exceed this threshold. However, the overall effect of these new rules on forestry transactions will depend on how they are applied and interpreted in practice.





The future

None of the provisions of the Bill are yet in force as the Bill is still progressing through Parliament. During Stage 3 of the process, MSPs will get the chance to propose further amendments, which will be debated. Finally, MSPs will vote on whether the Bill should be passed into law, and Scottish Government's intention is that this will happen during the Parliament current term, before the May 2026 election.



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Rotting and decaying timber – a question of negligent design or poor protection?

Andrew Pratten, Associate, and Anna Wood, Partner, in the Michelmores Construction and Engineering team present a case study that outlines the responsibilities of parties involved in timber construction.

In April this year, the Technology and Construction Court was tasked with deciding whether an architect had been negligent in the provision of its services relating to water ingress experienced on site.

The water ingress caused damage to timber forming part of the construction of the Claimant's new headquarters in Royal Lemington Spa (Vistoe Limited v Waugh Thistleton Architects Limited [2025] EWHC 850 (TCC)).

Background

The Claimant, Vitsoe Limited, a furniture manufacturer (VL) appointed the Defendant, Waugh Thistleton Architects Limited (WTA), to provide architectural services relating to the construction of its new headquarters, office and distribution facility. WTA expressed itself to be a leader in engineered timber and a pioneer in the field of tall timber buildings.

VL separately engaged JCA Concept Construction Ltd (JCA), a construction manager; Hess Timber GmbH and Co (Hess), a timber frame contractor; and Stoneleigh Services Ltd (Stoneleigh), a roofing contractor, as part of the

construction project team.

The headquarters was designed and constructed using engineered timber in the form of laminated veneer timber (LVL) posts and 25m full width span beams and cross laminated timber (CLT) wall and roof panels.

The claim

The site suffered sustained rainfall around Christmas 2016 resulting in the roof panels becoming saturated during the completion of the works. The timber roof was subsequently found to be rotting and decaying, necessitating remedial works that VL costed at around £4m.

VL alleged that WTA had been negligent in the provision of its architectural services. Specifically, VL stated that WTA had:

- Failed to produce a Moisture Content Control Plan (MCCP) or risk assessment;
- Failed to identify that Hess's tender did not provide adequate moisture protection in respect of the CLT;
- Failed to respond appropriately to CLT's exposure to rainfall during December 2016; and
- Erroneously believed that the CLT would dry out.

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The Court's findings

Under the terms of their respective contracts, JCA, Hess and Stoneleigh were obliged to use reasonable skill and care to satisfy WTA's Timber Frame and Combined Specifications (which the expert witnesses in this case considered were suitable for the project) and to otherwise "Protect the Trade Works during construction".

The judge held that on the facts of this particular case, WTA did not owe a duty to protect the Trade Works during their construction. Further, while WTA was appointed as the design team lead, it was only obliged to review and report upon subcontractors' tenders "where required". Hess had in this case "committed to provide temporary weather protection to the CLT".

There was therefore no obligation on WTA to recommend that a temporary roof must be provided to protect the Trade Works. WTA was also not obliged to undertake an MCCP or risk assessment.

The Court found that WTA had provided a suitable and robust

specification which provided adequate and suitable information for moisture control.

Practical implications on site

The inherent nature of construction sites requires parties to store and protect materials that will eventually form part of the project, at the risk of the material otherwise becoming damaged and unsuitable for use. The storage and incorporation of timber into a project is no different.

In particular, the case is a staunch reminder that contractors, and subcontractors may need to:

- Provide adequate protection to the works during construction;
- Coordinate with other contractors, subcontractors and, where relevant, the construction manager to manage programming, and to ensure works are undertaken sequentially and in a timely manner to minimise the potential exposure of materials that may be vulnerable to the effects of inclement weather; and
- Comply with instructions issued by a

contract administrator and/or construction manager.

As readers will know, moisture ingress into CLT and LVL can lead to reductions in the structural integrity of the material due to physical changes in the bonding and dimensional stability (i.e. the material's ability to maintain its original shape and size). Moisture in such products can also enable the growth of organisms that degrade timber over time.

Without wishing to state the obvious, moisture exclusion is a key aspect in the design, construction and the maintenance of timber-based buildings, starting at manufacturing, through to delivery and installation of the product.

Ensuring the appointed construction team understands the importance of providing adequate material protection will help guard against the risk of damage to the works, and ultimately the need for what could be costly repairs.

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Bradford Estates open historic woodlands to public

Bradford Estates has opened a new woodland walk 'The Bradford Walk', making its historic woodlands more accessible to the public, with 10 miles of newly created permissive public paths.

Sir William Worsley, Forestry Commission Chair, did the honours at the official opening of 'The Bradford Walk', a public access trek through Bradford Estates' new and historic woodlands, in September.

The Walk combines 10 miles (16km) of newly created permissive paths with existing walkways, enhancing connectivity and becoming what is believed to be the longest public path funded via the England Woodland Creation Offer (EWCO) scheme.

As part of Bradford Estates' 100-Year Plan, championed by custodians Alexander and Eliza Newport, the project integrates historic woodland with newly planted areas, supported by the EWCO scheme. Over 195,000 UK-grown trees will be planted, enhancing wildlife habitats, connecting communities with nature, and significantly increasing woodland cover over the next decade.

Alexander Newport, Managing Director of Bradford Estates, commented: "We want to open up our beautiful estates in a sensitive way and create connectivity for both native wildlife and the local community as well as visitors to the area. In these times, when people are calling for more green space, access to nature has never been more important.

"As an organisation, we are also acutely aware of the Climate Emergency and believe this scheme will contribute towards the nation's net zero targets."

The estates, located on the border of Shropshire and Staffordshire, are home to historic woodlands that cover almost 10% of its 12,000 acres. Access to these natural spaces has been private for nearly 1,000 years.

The woodland planting and access are funded through the EWCO, administered by the Forestry Commission, supporting Bradford Estates' aim to increase woodland cover on its landholding to 20% over the next 15 years and consequently sequester significant amounts of carbon dioxide as a contribution towards the UK's net zero targets.



The planting of the trees was completed by the end of the 2025 planting season with the trail's construction completed subsequently with wayfinding, gates and other infrastructure.

In a rare and innovative approach, the planting has been entirely plastic-free. To achieve this, Bradford Estates is investing nearly double the usual costs to use eco-friendly tree guards made from cotton and pine resin.

'The Bradford Walk' will address the current fragmentation of public rights of way in the area, creating a cohesive

network that links pleasure grounds, carriageways and local heritage assets such as Weston Park, Boscobel House and Tong village. The project intends to celebrate the public's access to this carefully crafted environment and pay homage to the estates' historic designs originally influenced by renowned landscape architect Lancelot 'Capability' Brown in the 18th and 19th centuries.

Keith Jones, Area Director at the Forestry Commission, said: "It's fantastic to see the new woodland being planted at Bradford Estates. This project is an example of how landowners can play a key role in helping to achieve the national target for woodland cover in England and net zero target.

"The expansion of timber-producing woodlands, alongside improvements in water quality, nature recovery, and river ecosystems, is incredibly positive, as is offering the local community easier access to the woodlands and surrounding countryside."

Future plans for the permissive trails include parking facilities, art installations and possibly a playground, establishing a community facility that will enable Bradford Estates to hold events and other activities.



The asterisk on 2025 sales

John Clegg & Co's **Simon Hart**, Head of Forestry Scotland, and **Stuart Higgins**, Associate Director, share insight on the factors affecting recent woodland sales.

A two-tier market is developing for Scottish plantations. There is strong demand for spruce dominated woods in south Scotland, but demand weakens significantly as one moves west and north, away from the main markets.

One of the most noteworthy sales of recent months, or indeed for many years, is the sale of the huge Griffin woodland from a private investor to a Gresham Fund for £145 million.

Originally planted in the early 1980s by the Midland Bank Pension Fund (hence the name from their logo), this large block extending to 5,634ha for the two lots is now well into its second rotation. It has a scale to produce timber

income every year in perpetuity. Average age is c. 40 years for this spruce dominated woodland, with average Yield Class (YC) at some 14.

The sale price for the larger Griffin block equates to about £40,000/stocked hectare but does include an element of wind farm rental income perhaps equating to £3,000/ha.

Griffin took a while to sell having first come to the market about three years ago. There were a number of false starts, but it eventually sold for more than the original guide. This is proof that the UK forestry investment market can work at large scale.

The impact of this transaction cannot be overestimated; some years the total commercial woodland market has

been less than this one transaction. All future forest market analysis will have an asterisk against 2025 – the Griffin year. The sale generated a lot of chatter on social media, much of it ill informed, but revealing nevertheless; investment forestry does not get a good press.

Other notable sales include Burnhouse Moor in South Lanarkshire and Merrylaw in the Borders. Both woods went to closing dates quickly and received competitive bids. Neither have concluded at the time of writing but are under offer.

Burnhouse was planted in 1985/86 with over 90% Sitka spruce (pre-UKFS and the 5% mandatory broadleaves). Guided at offers over £4.75m this 130ha wood came to the market with a detailed



so it makes sense for the seller to provide one for all interested parties.

Merrylaw is a second rotation wood, so slightly more advanced than Burnhouse, extending to 323ha with 258ha stocked and guided at £4.45m. Average age is 10 years and YC estimated at 18+. The sale price is estimated at £19,000/stocked hectare, suggesting investors are expecting timber prices to pick up from current levels.

While spruce woods in the south are selling well, this is not the case in the west and north. Timber prices have been flat at best for quite a few years and are well down on the post-Covid peaks of 2021/22.

Fluctuations in timber prices have a more pronounced effect on plantation values in areas of lower timber price. For example, if a mixed conifer crop had a standing price of £30/t and that falls to £20/t, then a third of the value has been lost. A spruce crop in the south may have fallen from £60 to £50 which is only a one sixth value fall.

This gearing effect is amplified by ever increasing restock costs. Let us take a modest crop in the north, standing at 300 tonnes/ha and at £25/t standing to produce a return of £7,500/ha. However, restocking at say £5,000/ha makes a big hole in the income and really challenges the project as a viable investment vehicle.

This caution in the non-core investment areas means there is now quite a lot of product on the market. Sellers need to be more patient than in recent years to achieve best price.

The small wood and amenity market in Scotland remains typically fickle with a wide range of prices paid for apparently similar woods. There are many variables that impact price including access, development hope value, amenity, public

access, and the level of local interest. These features are often not easy to predict at the outset when setting guide prices.

We recently brought a collection of relatively small woods to the market in Aberdeenshire ranging in size from 2-43ha. At the time of writing 12 are under offer and two remain available. Sale prices range from £4,000-£14,000/ha with offers generally above the guide, some more than double. Weaker prices were achieved for sites with high public access.

The two that remain for sale are straightforward spruce-dominated second rotation woods guided at £125K and £275K. They are perhaps in a currently weak part of the market. Too big for the local amenity buyer, but not big enough for the forestry funds.

Planting land is still changing hands, but at lower prices and lower volumes than when the market peaked in 2021/2022. The ever-increasing challenges in getting approval, combined with mixed signals from the Scottish Government on its commitment to climate change targets, all hits investor confidence. It is much easier to buy an existing woodland and avoid the hassle.

There is relatively little on the market in northern England, but we have just launched Great Allotment near Ulverston in the south Lake District. This attractive second rotation mixed conifer woodland extending to 41ha is available at offers over £390,000. It has a core of 10-20 year-old spruce with areas of Douglas, Norway, and broadleaves. With good access to centres of population in north England we expect it to sell well.

In summary, good quality, large properties are selling well. For all else, careful pricing is required to generate interest and even then, patience may be required to achieve market price.

timber inventory showing some 73,000 tonnes of timber at an impressive 640 tonnes/ha. Well-established (as Simon should know, as he was the manager when it was planted!) and an average YC 22 with tree heights typically 25 metres and some at 28m. There has been no thinning or felling and limited windblow.

The estimated sale price is in the region of £43,000/stocked hectare, but heavily underpinned by current standing timber value. We are seeing an increasing number of properties come to the market with a reliable timber measurement in place. We think this makes sense for all parties as it gives buyers increased confidence in the value of the asset.

Serious buyers of a multi-million-pound asset are going to undertake their own timber measurement,



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SCANNING THE FUTURE OF FORESTRY

How laser technology is set to transform timber valuation and carbon accounting in Welsh woodlands

Timber from UK woodlands is often undervalued. Despite widespread availability, only around 4% of hardwood harvested in the UK makes its way into structural applications such as construction. The rest, much of it high-quality material, is downgraded to firewood or other short-lived uses. This not only limits the income of woodland owners but also undermines the potential of timber.

Research at Bangor University, in partnership with Woodknowledge Wales, has been testing how the application of terrestrial laser scanning (TLS) to the valuation of standing timber and the measurement of carbon stocks in Welsh farm woodlands could change this.

Findings indicate that TLS can

add important new capacity for the measurement of complex and undermanaged forests, helping unlock greater economic and environmental value in woodland areas that until now have been considered marginal.

Why timber valuation needs to change

The structural properties of timber — straightness, taper, sweep, lean, presence of knots or reaction wood — are critical in determining how wood can be used. Yet standing trees are usually valued for timber purposes with only rough visual assessments. Conventional field instruments measure diameter at breast height (DBH) and height, but they provide little detail on stem form.



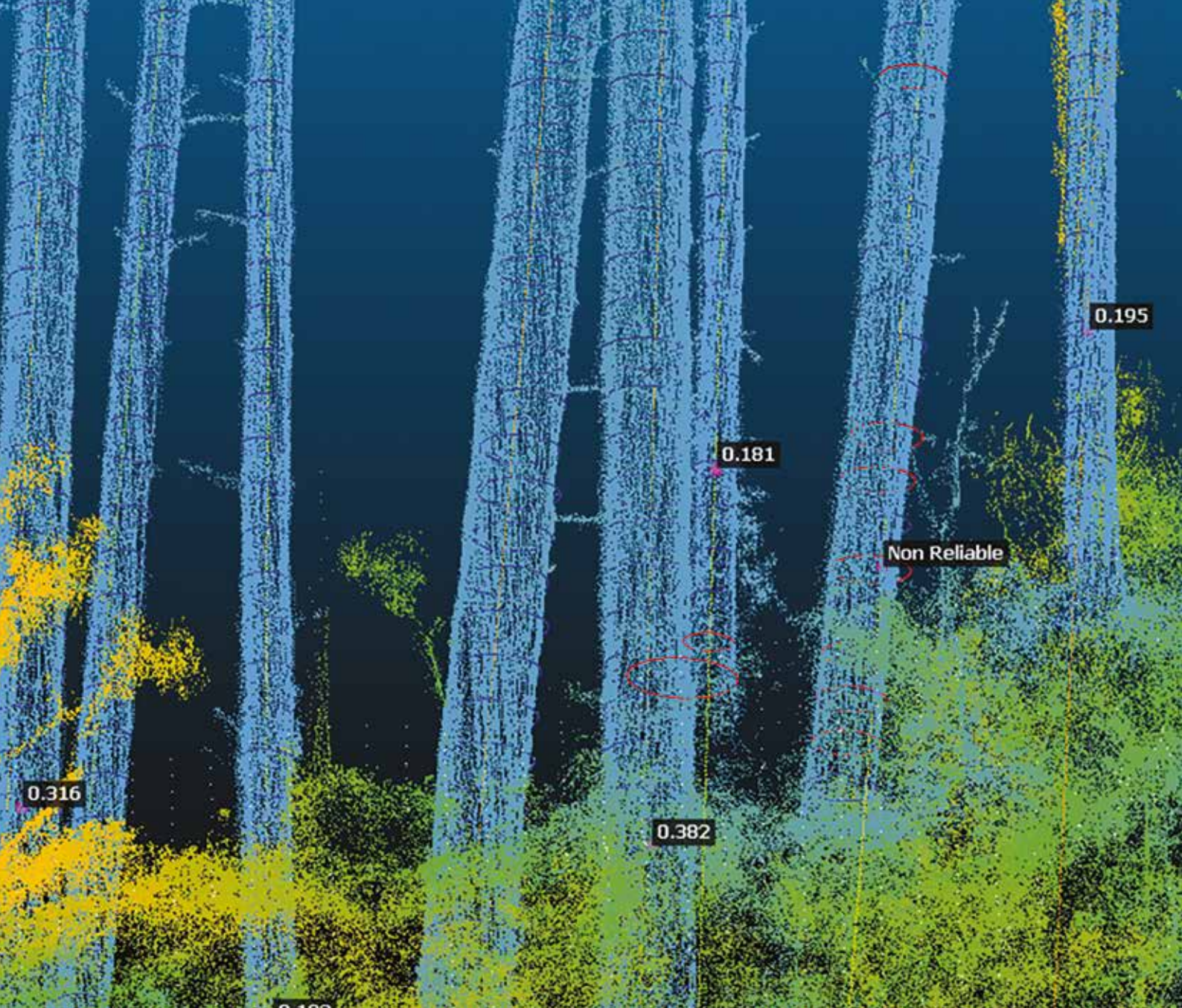
Because timber form cannot easily be quantified with traditional tools, material that might be suitable for long-life uses is often downgraded. For broadleaf woodlands in particular, where form is variable, the result is predictable: most material is channelled into low-value firewood markets.

Accurate measurement would allow woodland owners, sawmills and manufacturers to identify more timber suitable for construction and other long-life uses. This would not only raise financial returns but also maximise carbon storage in harvested wood products.

What Terrestrial Laser Scanning brings to forestry

TLS is a ground-based form of LiDAR (Light Detection and Ranging). A tripod-mounted scanner emits thousands of laser pulses per second (360,000 in this case), recording the time it takes for each to intercept vegetation and reflect back to the instrument. The result is a





Above: TLS (terrestrial laser scanning – LiDAR) point cloud of forest showing fitted diameter sections and stem diameter values (labels) processed using the 3DFin plugin. Below left; The Leica BLK360 TLS (terrestrial laser scanning) device used to scan a plot (central, in black) and two of the three reference spheres (white) used to act as tie-points to assist in alignment of individual scans. Image credits: Woodknowledge Wales.

detailed three-dimensional “point cloud” model of the forest stand.

Unlike conventional tools, TLS can capture both basic forest metrics (DBH, height, tree positions) and fine-scale details of stem form. It can record sweep, taper, lean and branch incidence — factors that directly affect timber grade.

TLS is already applied commercially in UK forestry, with companies such as Treemetrics offering laser scanning services for inventory and management planning. This research does not seek to replicate or compete with such services but to extend understanding of how TLS can be applied in under-managed or structurally complex farm woodlands.

We also developed an algorithm to apply TLS data to UK sawlog grading

standards. The method preferably selects the highest-value sawlogs harvestable from a tree based on straightness criteria in line with the criteria for inclusion in the ‘green’ (high quality) and ‘red’ (low quality) sawlogs categories used commercially.

By applying this algorithm, we showed that TLS can predict sawlog product output and therefore estimate the standing value of a tree before harvest even in highly structurally complex woodlands.

The same datasets also allow more accurate measurement of tree volume and biomass, enabling better estimation of carbon stored in standing trees. We believe this offers valuable evidence to inform decisions about whether, for a given tree, most benefit for reducing

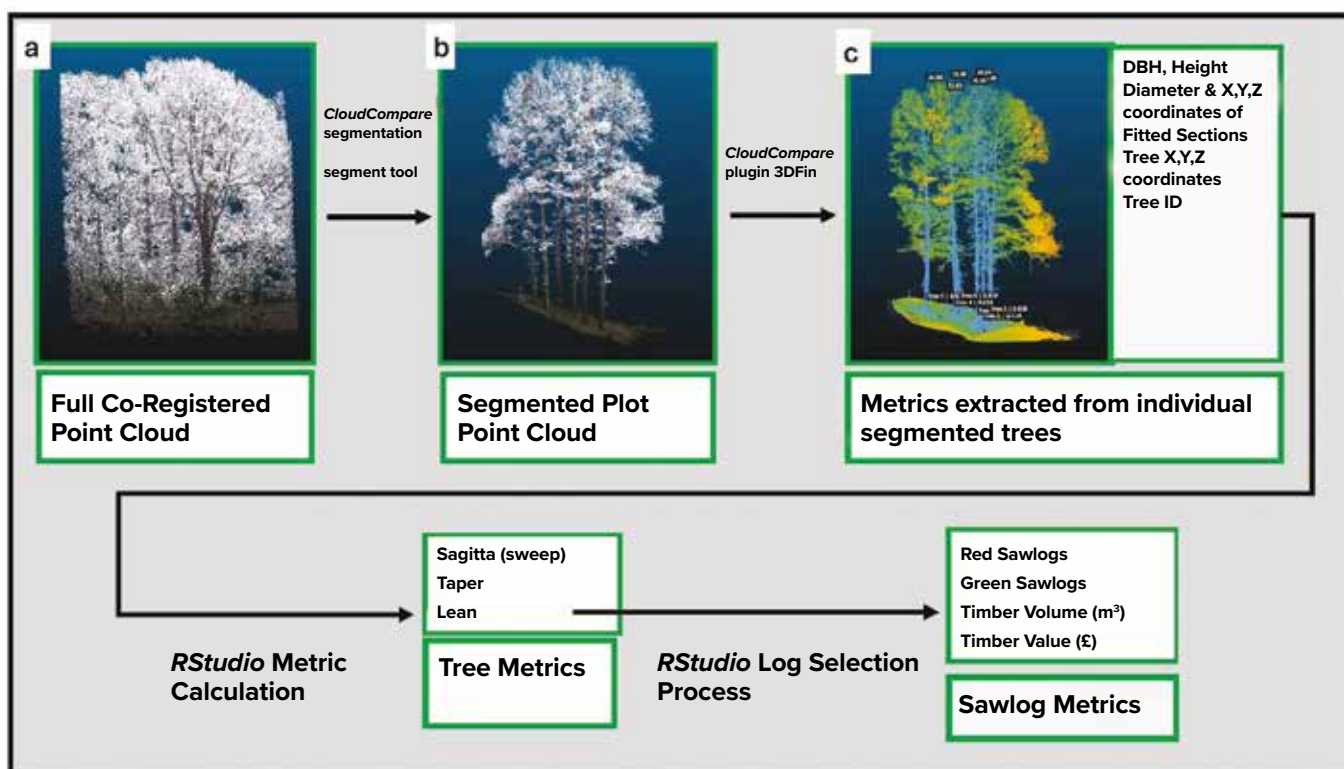
global warming would be obtained by harvesting or by leaving it standing as a long-term living carbon store.

Measuring Welsh woodlands

TLS was used to measure eight woodland sites across Wales, covering a spectrum from uniform Douglas fir plantations to unmanaged, naturally regenerated farm woodlands. In total, 11 plots were scanned, covering 55 trees (32 broadleaf, 23 conifer).

Each plot was surveyed both with TLS and with conventional manual instruments for comparison. The agreement between methods was strong: TLS and manual measurements of DBH were nearly identical, while correlations for height, taper, sweep and lean were also high.

>>



Method used for the calculation of metrics from LiDAR point cloud of a forest. Each step describes a separate stage in the semi-automatic data processing method. Image credit: Woodknowledge Wales.

We then processed the TLS data through our sawlog algorithm, generating estimates of timber product outputs and carbon content. Using 2023 timber sales prices, we were able to calculate the potential value of standing trees in each plot.

The results confirmed that TLS can provide a more precise quantification of the potential timber value and the carbon storage of trees in small and complex woodlands than can be achieved with conventional inventory methods. By identifying straight sections of stems that meet sawlog criteria, the technology could help redirect timber away from the firewood pile and into structural markets.

Barriers to adoption

As with any emerging technology, there are limitations. TLS scanners are sensitive to conditions: rain and wind speeds above 10–15 mph can compromise scans. Surveys require careful placement of reference points to align multiple scans, and data processing remains highly technical.

At present, turning a raw point cloud into usable forestry metrics involves several stages across different software platforms, with manual inputs at each step. The process demands expensive equipment, specialist training, and

is time-consuming. Until automated processing platforms are widely available, this complexity will restrict uptake in research and smaller-scale applications.

Commercial providers, however, have already developed systems that can deliver operational services for clients.

Transformative potential

While TLS is already used commercially in UK forestry, our study highlights how the approach can be extended to more complex and under-managed woodlands, creating opportunities in areas where conventional inventories or commercial services are less commonly applied.

- **For farmers and small woodland owners:** Our work shows how TLS can be applied to irregular or mixed stands where conventional surveys are less effective, putting more useful data in their hands and helping justify investment in management and opening access to timber or carbon markets.
- **For processors:** By linking TLS outputs directly to UK sawlog grading criteria, we demonstrate how processors could gain clearer insights into potential product streams from woodlands that are otherwise difficult to evaluate.
- **For policy and carbon accounting:** Our findings illustrate how TLS could

improve the accuracy of carbon assessments in mixed or under-managed woodlands, complementing existing commercial applications in more uniform plantations.

For Wales, these opportunities align with the goals of the Woodknowledge Wales' Home-Grown Homes project and the Welsh Government's Timber Industrial Strategy: to reduce reliance on imports, build rural economies, and store more carbon in long-life wood products.

We conclude that if technological and cost barriers can be further reduced, TLS can help extend the range of contexts in which timber is effectively valued and used. By raising the proportion of Welsh timber directed into construction, it could simultaneously enhance economic returns and strengthen the role of forestry in meeting net-zero commitments.

Estimating Timber Value and Carbon in Complex Woodlands Using Terrestrial Laser Scanning (2025) is authored by Heddwyn Bye, MSc researcher at Bangor University in partnership with Woodknowledge Wales. The project was co-supervised by Dr Marielle Smith and Professor John Healey (Bangor University) and Matthew Drummond (University of Wales Trinity Saint David).

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ANSWERING QUESTIONS AT THE HEART OF SUSTAINABLE DESIGN

EGGER has launched an immersive showroom celebrating sustainable design in partnership with CLEAF and BLUM. Forestry & Timber News and other guests were invited to explore the space and hear how longevity is embedded in the product supply chain.

EGGER LONDON brings together three family-owned companies - EGGER, CLEAF and BLUM - at One Dallington Street in Clerkenwell, London's globally leading design community. The showroom welcomes guests from around the world to create, collaborate and specify in the bright, open space.

Inside, visitors are greeted by a spacious open atrium, centred by a statement, bespoke feature pendant that tells the story of EGGER's history of celebrating wood. The interior is packed with large format samples, supporting resources, and on-hand expertise from its team.



The showroom is founded by EGGER, a leading, global manufacturer of wood-based materials for interior design and construction. With its unique sole supplier offer for designers, specifiers, architects and fabricators, EGGER supplies a range of decorative materials for interior furniture, surfaces and wall panelling, decorative interior flooring and structural flooring, suitable for commercial and domestic projects.

Priding itself on its strong environmental ethos and sustainable product portfolio, EGGER operates environmentally conscious manufacturing processes at 22 facilities worldwide.

Max McLaughlan, Directory of Forestry and Head of Wood Purchasing at EGGER UK, was on hand to share EGGER's approach to timber sourcing, what he describes as a "closed loop production cycle".

"People need kitchens. The material has to come from somewhere. Let's use wood," he said. "We spend 40 to 50 years growing it, let's use it to make something useful and sustainable."

He pointed out that making high-quality and long-lasting products with timber locks away the CO2 absorbed over the original tree's lifetime, in stark contrast to the use of more carbon intense materials like plastics



or concrete. Harvested trees are also replaced by the next cycle of planting, and 90% of the raw timber processed by EGGER at their Hexham site comes from well-managed forests within 150km.

"We're displacing other products that emit carbon," he explained. "It's not a bad thing to cut a tree down and use that timber because all the timber we use has been grown as a crop."

It is an inherent belief at EGGER that wood should, wherever possible, be used to make things before it is burnt to generate energy. In an example of long circularity, nearly half of the material in EGGER wood-based panel boards is recycled timber, with the rest made up from sawmill by-product and harvested logs.

Tom Nesfield, Environmental Manager and Energy Manager at EGGER UK, then described how the timber unsuitable for production that comes to their plant in Hexham goes



into powering the site, saving 67,000 tonnes of CO2 per year by burning unusable wood residue instead of natural gas.

“Our ethos is to get as much from wood as we can,” he stated.

This is an attitude shared by EGGER’s partners in the showroom: CLEAF, an Italian company producing innovative surfaces for furniture and interiors, and BLUM, global-leading manufacturer of lift, hinge, pull out and pocket systems for furniture and interiors.

Amanda Hughes, Architect and Interior Design Channel Manager for Blum UK, summed up their perspective on designing wood products for end users: “If we’ve spent that long growing it, and that long manufacturing it, we need to do more than make a box with a flap on it.”

She urged the audience to consider longevity as integral to sustainability. Products should not just be designed to be recyclable or repurposed, but to

stay usable and stylish for a long time to come.

BLUM specialise in solution-led product development that improves quality of living and working. Using motion technologies, they focus on ergonomic designs that prioritise accessibility and functionality, so their products remain fit-for-purpose across the longest timespan possible, both for the customer whose lifestyle and mobility may change over time and for future generations of users.

“Yes, plant a tree today,” Amanda said. “But what will the future look like? What will it be used for?”

Anna Gibson, Decorative Product Manager at EGGER UK, expressed a responsibility to educate clients on designing for longevity. Sustainability is now an expectation from both customers and regulators, necessitating enhanced support from manufacturers and the provision of products that meet changing priorities.

“We think of ourselves as trend leaders so it’s really important to remain at the forefront,” she said.

By embracing biophilic design (the incorporation of natural elements into the core aesthetic of a space) in their decorative materials as well as in the showroom itself, EGGER London is promoting timeless finishes that a space can evolve around without needless waste.

It is a concept gaining more traction, for example at the nearby six-story Paradise in Lambeth, the UK’s largest mass timber office building, where the exposed CLT and glulam structure leaves natural wood grain on display throughout the workspaces.

Max pointed to this building as an example of what can be achieved with sustainably sourced timber and expressed hope that policy initiatives like the Timber in Construction Roadmap will make similar projects more popular in the future.



Over 96% of waste wood material processed in 2024

The UK's waste wood market remained buoyant in 2024, with strong demand for material, according to the latest statistics published by the Wood Recyclers' Association (WRA).

Of the 4.5 million tonnes of waste wood arising in the UK last year, the vast majority (4.33 million tonnes) was sent for reuse, recycling or recovery – equivalent to over 96%.

This achievement was similar to the 97% processed in 2023 – and could in reality represent a slightly higher percentage, given that limited activity in the construction sector may have marginally reduced waste wood arisings compared to previous years, according to the WRA.

The 2024 figures were compiled by the WRA using its annual survey of members who handle approximately 90% of the waste wood market by volume. These figures are extrapolated, alongside latest industry data, to produce figures for the whole of the UK.

Other key takeaways include:

- Large-scale biomass continued to be the largest end user of waste wood during the year, accounting for 2.8

million tonnes (65%) of material (no increase from 2023). This demonstrates the sector's important role in delivering secure, renewable baseload power.

- The panel board industry remained the second largest user of waste wood, using over 920,000 tonnes of waste wood (21% of processed material). This represented a small (4.5%) decrease compared to 2023, due to the depressed housing market and the closure of the West Fraser South Molton manufacturing plant.
- The amount of waste wood used for animal bedding, equine surfacing, other recycling and reuse decreased 11% year-on-year to 310,000 tonnes. This fall was linked to reduced demand for poultry bedding due to avian flu, alongside reduced construction activity impacting reuse.
- Pallet refurbishment and reuse of wooden items through local authority reuse hubs increased during the year – something which is excluded from the figures but which the WRA hopes to report on in future.
- Exports/imports netted off rose 2.8% year-on-year to approximately 211,000 tonnes, representing 5% of the market. This was due to high demand for biomass feedstock in Europe.
- Usage in small scale biomass remained static at 90,000 tonnes, representing 2% of the market.

Julia Turner, Executive Director of the WRA, said: "These figures show the UK waste wood market remains balanced and in great shape with well-developed and environmentally compliant markets for all domestic material.

"We are very proud to say that nearly all waste wood is being utilised, with only a very tiny fraction being sent to informal markets, such as being burnt on bonfire night, or being sent to landfill. In this way our sector plays an important role in supporting the circular economy, net zero and energy security in the UK."

The UK panel board sector sequestered 1.09 million tonnes of carbon in 2024 through its use of recycled wood in chipboard, as reported by Wood Panel Industries Federation.

Additionally, waste wood biomass continued to save 701,000 tonnes of carbon emissions in 2024 when compared to the likely displaced generation, with the potential to save 3.6 million tonnes with carbon capture and storage (CCS).

Julia said: "Our latest carbon savings figures highlight how our sector is helping to drive down emissions by both locking away carbon in panel board products and displacing fossil fuels. Our contribution is even greater if you take in account the carbon savings achieved through other recycling and reuse, which we hope to report on in future."

Scott Pallets collaborates with BSW Group businesses to strengthen logistics offer

Scott Pallets is continuing to drive innovation in the supply chain through a series of strategic logistics initiatives, implemented in conjunction with parent company BSW Group.

By working closely with haulage providers and internal partners, such as sister businesses BSW Timber and Tilhill Forestry, the company is reducing empty miles, improving asset utilisation, and cutting carbon emissions.

A key development this year has been the reloading of vehicles, with those that have completed pallet deliveries for Scott Pallets now often being backloaded with BSW Timber sawn products.

By strategically coordinating these return journeys, Scott Pallets is reducing empty miles, cutting unnecessary fuel use, and lowering its carbon footprint, helping to improve operational efficiency across both the pallet and timber supply chains. As of August, around 300 deliveries have already been backloaded, with most of these trips involving the Scott Pallets fleet at its Barry site. These vehicles have been used to deliver pallets to customers as normal, before collecting material from BSW Timber's Newbridge-on-Wye sawmill for the return leg. These backhauls are a prime example of sustainability delivering commercial value.



Through this close collaboration with BSW, Scott Pallets has also strengthened relationships with key haulage partners, including H&R Gray and Johnsons Haulage, who have also supported the initiative. This strategic partnership has enabled Scott Pallets to reconfigure loads for improved presentation at customer sites and redeploy trailers across the network.

In a further step towards sustainable operations, Scott Pallets at Ellesmere Port has also introduced a walking floor vehicle to streamline the management of on-site wood waste.

This means that as well as carrying out standard pallet deliveries, the vehicle will also collect scrap wood for biomass use. In another key partnership, Scott Pallets is now working with fellow BSW Group member Tilhill Forestry to supply this biomass material to Shotton Mill in Deeside.

These initiatives highlight the value of internal collaboration, forward-planning and fleet optimisation in delivering environmental gains. With a strong focus on reducing waste, cutting carbon, the company continues to lead by example in the timber and pallet industry.

Report sees a softening of the non-firewood hardwood timber market in 2024

Forest Research, in collaboration with Grown in Britain, has published the Hardwood Price-size Curves report for the 2024 Calendar Year.

The report presents updated price-size curves for UK-grown hardwood species during the 2024 calendar year. It builds on methodologies used in previous editions, combining survey data and expert judgment, particularly from Graham Taylor, a seasoned timber market expert.

It estimates standing sale prices (£/m³) across varying tree sizes for ash, beech, cherry, lime, oak, poplar, sweet chestnut and sycamore. The report notes that there was generally a softening of the non-firewood hardwood timber market in

2024 as prices weakened slightly.

Gregory Valatin, Principal Economist at Forest Research, commented: "In most cases there appears to have been a marked fall in hardwood timber prices in the second half of the year, reducing the overall average for the year, with many of the higher grades of ash, sycamore, and sweet chestnut having lower prices than those in 2022 to 2023. Oak appears to have been an exception to this with higher prices in 2024 than in the previous years.

"Firewood prices also appear to have remained high throughout 2024, with material for the firewood and biomass markets continuing to be in demand. Prices seemed to have stabilised

compared to the increases seen between 2022 and 2023."

Dougal Driver, CEO, Grown in Britain, added: "For many landowners, the timber value of their trees remains unclear, and this uncertainty often leads to woodlands being left unmanaged.

"Grown in Britain believes by researching and publishing current average prices, better-informed landowners will actively manage their woods. This results in increased homegrown timber for sawmills, enhanced biodiversity, and reduced reliance on unnecessary imports."

The report was funded by the UK Government through Defra's Nature for Climate Fund programme.

Choosing timber products for a circular economy

Tom Barnes, Managing Director at Vastern Timber, details the key things to consider when sourcing timber for sustainable outcomes, with real-use cases of homegrown hardwood meeting client needs.

Timber is one of the few truly renewable building materials available — but to fully embrace a circular economy, we need to go beyond simply sourcing wood from responsibly managed forests. A circular approach aims to eliminate waste and keep materials in use for as long as possible. When buying timber products, here are six key principles to consider:

1. Source and sustainability

Start by selecting timber from well-managed, sustainable sources. Look for independent certification from FSC, PEFC or GIB, and wherever possible, opt for British-grown timber to reduce transport emissions and support local forestry.

2. Durability and lifespan

Choosing naturally durable timber reduces the need for chemical preservatives and extends the life of the product. Longer-lasting materials delay the need for replacement, keeping carbon locked up and reducing overall environmental impact.

Longevity is one of the most effective ways to build sustainably. Avoiding chemical preservatives increases the potential for re-use and recycling into secondary products.

3. Design for disassembly and reuse

Think ahead to how timber will eventually be removed or repurposed. Products that can be easily taken apart are far more likely to be

reused. Choose mechanical fixings like screws instead of nails or adhesives, and avoid composites or laminates that are difficult to separate.

4. Repairable products

Favour products that can be repaired, refinished, or renewed. Solid timber can often be sanded and re-coated, unlike laminates or composite materials. Choose simple surface treatments that can be reapplied at home, rather than complex factory-applied coatings that are difficult to maintain.

5. Use of reclaimed or recycled timber

Reclaimed wood gives valuable material a second life and adds character to any

CASE STUDY: An outdoor retreat in the heart of Dulwich

Ellicar, award-winning designers of natural swimming pools and garden landscapes, have recently built an outdoor urban retreat in Dulwich, South London. The centrepiece of the garden is a large, chemical-free natural swimming pool, designed to support their clients' outdoor-living lifestyle and to enjoy dining, lounging, relaxing, and entertaining.

The expansive wrap-around decking, created using our Brimstone Ash, not only frames the pool beautifully but also defines key garden zones and provides essential access throughout the space. The decking offers dedicated areas for dining and sunbathing, creating seamless indoor-outdoor living.

Functionally, the deck conceals the



Photo credits: Ellicar.

pool's hydraulics and biological filtration system. The decking design system incorporates a set of large, discreet access hatches, up to 1.3m wide, which can be easily lifted by one person using manhole keys, making ongoing maintenance practical and safe.

The site posed significant challenges: tree preservation orders (TPOs) and root protection zones meant our team had to hand-dig every post hole following strict

arboricultural guidelines. We developed a construction method that protects the timber structure from moisture, using pool liner, plastic deck packers, and deck tape to prevent water ingress and ensure longevity.

The finished result is a striking and functional outdoor living hub that the Ellicar's clients are thrilled with. The deck is central to how they use and enjoy their garden, turning it into a calm and contemporary oasis in the city.



Photo credits: Smarttrams.

CASE STUDY: Blending in with a tree-lined landscape

project. Also look for manufacturers who use by-products, offcuts, or recycled content in their products — such as OSB or engineered boards made from waste wood.

6. End-of-life potential

Finally, consider what happens when the timber reaches the end of its use. Can it be reused, recycled, or, as a last resort, converted to biomass energy? Avoid chemically treated products or additives that make disposal hazardous or limit reuse options.

By making informed choices, we can keep timber in circulation longer, reduce waste, and support a more sustainable, resilient economy.

This striking steel frame structure with a brick plinth and timber-framed walls was designed by the owner of Smarttrams building firm in Suffolk, to serve as their workshop and storage facility.

Cladding played a major role in the external aesthetic of the building. Surrounded by well-established trees, the aim was to choose a material that would blend seamlessly into the environment.

The idea of a product that could weather naturally while maintaining its performance was particularly appealing. The goal was to avoid the need for regular upkeep, such as applying protective oil every eighteen months, just to preserve the integrity of the cladding.

After exploring several alternatives, our thermally modified Brimstone ash was selected, not just because of the way it weathers, but also because it allows for fine detailing, such as gluing corner profiles and rebating head details.

Our client needed a product that was dimensionally stable and would not shift or warp once installed. Brimstone, with its low moisture content, met these needs perfectly, allowing the cladding to be approached more like a joinery project, which suited the vision for the build.

The cladding has now been in place for three years and has weathered gradually and relatively evenly, with slightly different tones in the more sunny or shady areas.



Feeling the charge towards electric

Eamonn Wall decides that it is time to test drive an electric car, namely the Audi Q4.

Many folks in forestry are now considering an electric vehicle as their second car, with a diesel pick-up truck as their work vehicle.

Of course, Nissan have been selling their electric Leaf for many years, but it was Tesla that really got the electric car scene moving. In Europe, Jaguar was the first premium manufacturer to get an electric car to market with their I-Pace. Even though it was a very good vehicle, it is a bit odd looking, expensive and

never sold well.

Audi arrived with their e-tron range of vehicles and sales have been strong. So here we test drive their least expensive model: the Q4 e-tron.

The Q4 e-tron range starts off with the Q4 2WD version, reviewed here, with a starting price of £50,440. It can be optioned with 4WD for £51,870. It comes with an 82kw battery and a power of 286 bhp, exactly the same as the Skoda Enyaq 85. The Skoda costs £44,000 with 2WD and £48,750 with 4WD.



The Q4 has plenty of power and propels to 60mph in 6.7 seconds. It is very quiet and its power delivery is so smooth; it just moves effortlessly both up hills and along twisty roads and motorways.

It is almost the exact same size as the Skoda Enyaq at 4,588mm long, 1,599mm high and 1,865mm wide. It is not a small car but a good size for a family with a 520mm boot which extends to 1,490mm when the rear seats are down. The A5 Avant we reviewed last time is 200mm lower but 250mm longer, and £8,000 cheaper.

The 2WD version is rear wheel drive and tyres are 235/55 R 19. The turning circle is usefully tight at only 10.2m. The battery is stored skateboard-like below the floor with a range of about 300 miles. It seemed to vary enormously depending on your driving style. It needs servicing every two years or 19,000 miles whichever comes first, and the warranty is three years or 60,000 miles. There cannot be much involved in servicing? Of course, no fuel tank or AdBlue to worry about.

It weighs 2,145kg and can tow a 1,200kg trailer.

Audi charge £950 for a heat pump, which is a very useful device at reducing





power being used by the heater, and usually not charged extra for so that is disappointing.

Electrically powered cars are known for their quietness and good handling. Sometimes the ride can be a bit lumpy, but the Audi is certainly smooth and enjoyable to drive. The BIK tax treatment has encouraged a lot of company car drivers to choose an electric car and if you have off-street parking and your own charging point, they can make a lot of economic sense.

The whole issue is the charging and the cost of electricity charging at

motorway service stations etc.

Up to now, most electric cars have been large and expensive, so it is good to see cheaper electric cars coming onto the market to attract private purchases as opposed to company cars. This year saw the introduction of the new Renault 5 from £23,000, the Citroen eC3 from £22,000 and the funky Fiat Grande Panda from £21,000.

These are all really well-designed electric cars, which look great and are relatively cheap compared to electric cars so far. Cheaper petrol versions will also be available for the eC3 and Panda.

The Panda is certainly the most spacious of the three, looking like a bigger version of the original Panda from the 1980s. A 4WD version may also become available.

Back to the Q4 then. I would have liked to have test driven the 4WD version as it would have better traction, but as the ground clearance is not great, it is not for off-roading anyway. The Q4 is a nice car apart from the black grille, and apart from any charging issues, it is a good car to do a lot of driving in.

Eamonn Wall FICfor is a tree, woodland and forestry consultant and Director with Eamonn Wall & Co.



Building exterior. Photo credit: Willmott Dixon.

Climate-resilient forests boosted by new state-of-the-art tree seed processing centre

A new Forestry England facility will be doing the work to lay the “genetic foundation” of tomorrow’s forests with faster, better and more accurate seed processing.

Forestry England has officially opened its new seed processing centre at Delamere in Cheshire. The cutting-edge facility will support creating climate-resilient forests for future generations and strengthen the UK’s forestry infrastructure.

Forestry Minister Mary Creagh formally opened the new timber-framed, net zero building, which will process up to four tonnes of tree seeds each year and represents a major investment in the UK’s forestry sector.

Built next to one of Forestry England’s tree nursery sites, the centre will significantly expand its capacity to

process seeds from a wider variety of tree species, including those identified through research as better suited to thrive in changing climate conditions.

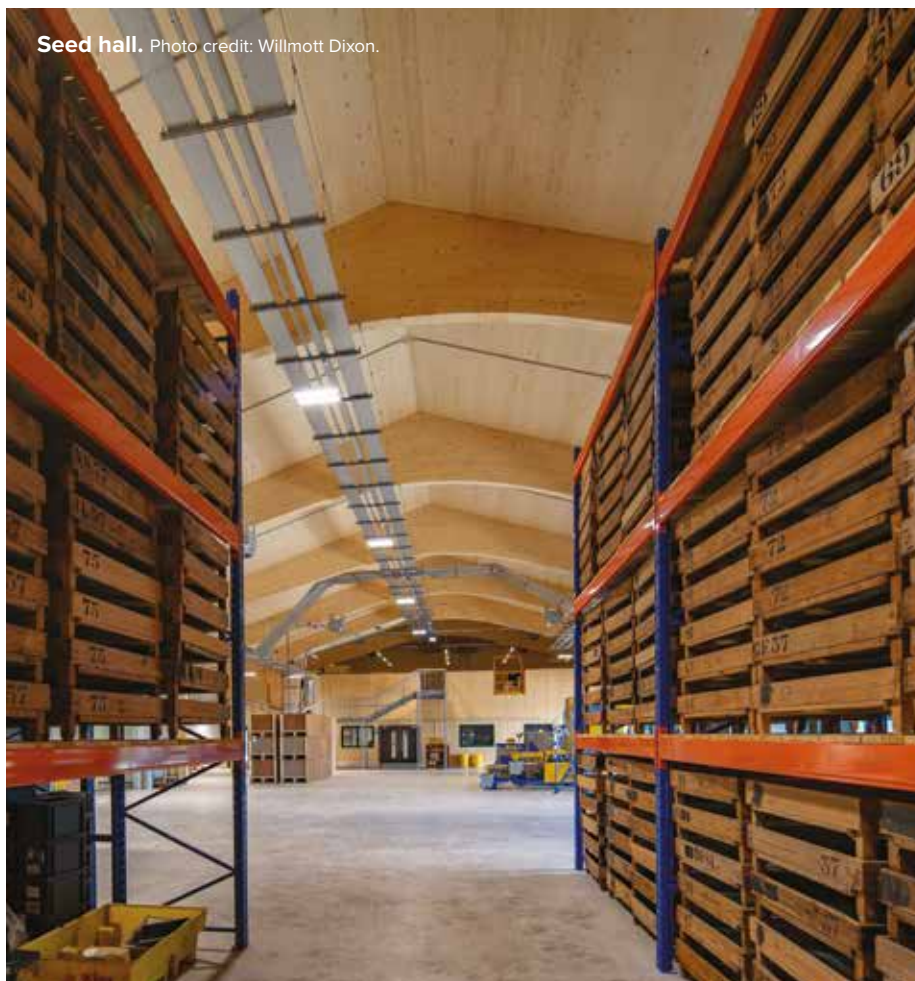
Forestry England focus on growing and planting tree species suited to the climate of the future, as backed by research. All the future tree species are expected to grow well and become more important as sources of sustainable, high-quality timber in drier, hotter conditions and play their part in storing carbon, improving air quality and mitigating flooding.

Tristram Hilborn, Forestry England’s Chief Operating Officer, said: “Forest

resilience is our most critical challenge, and this facility is a cornerstone of our strategy to plant and manage resilient forests that can withstand the threats of extreme weather, biodiversity loss, pests and diseases. The new equipment and huge additional capacity we now have puts us in the very best position to tackle these challenges right from the start of the decades-long forest lifecycle.

“Our nursery team dispatch millions of trees to our foresters every year as well as supplying others in the forestry sector. And each one started life as an individual seed that’s processed and grown with care. We need every single

Seed hall. Photo credit: Willmott Dixon.



conifer and broadleaf tree seeds for up to 20 years. Forestry England is installing more machinery and upgrades including a 3D X-ray scanner which can measure seed quality and a laser sorter to further improve processing accuracy, speed and quality.

Seed processed in the centre come from Forestry England's network of 12 specially planted seed orchards and 29 seed stands that stretch across the nation's forests, covering just over 300 hectares. Forestry England is planting and identifying more of these to increase the supply of high-quality genetic material.

“

This new seed processing centre is where we're building the genetic foundation for forests that will stand strong for decades.”

Trees grown from the processed seed go to restock forests harvested for their timber and create new woodlands which provide rich habitats for wildlife and beautiful spaces for people to enjoy. Supported by government funding, this year Forestry England completed a four-year woodland creation programme which saw 16 new woodlands planted with approximately 1.8 million trees.

Built by lead contractor Willmott Dixon, the 2,000m² building is timber-framed and has been designed to achieve excellent levels of environmental performance and will be net zero carbon in operation. Funding for the project came from the Government's Nature for Climate Fund alongside Forestry England investment.

Seed processing has already got underway, with Scots pinecones collected from Forestry England Thetford in East Anglia being among the first batch through the new processing machinery.

The centre has been named in honour of a long-serving and dedicated member of Forestry England's plant and seed supply team, Vernon Stockton. He played a key role in the organisation's plant and seed supply work for more than 40 years and passed away in 2022.



Seed processing centre opening event. Photo credit: Henry Terry.

one of those trees and the many millions we will plant in the decades ahead to thrive. They go on to provide enormous benefits for wildlife, for people and for a green economy, playing a huge role in tackling our climate crisis.

“This new seed processing centre is where we're building the genetic foundation for forests that will stand strong for decades. Building forest

resilience in this way is our opportunity to make sure the nation's forests continue to evolve, adapt, welcome people and contribute to a sustainable economy.”

The centre features advanced equipment including cone dryers for conifer tree seeds, gravity tables to sort and grade seed material, and climate-controlled storage that can preserve

Building connections for Women in Timber

The inaugural Women in Timber event took place on 5 September at Oulton Hall in Leeds to great success.

Laura Qualters, TDUK's Membership Development Manager, was the driving force behind this fantastic event, along with her support committee. She emotionally welcomed the packed room of female engineers, architects, wood processors, manufacturers, salespeople and foresters as well as professional services staff from human resources and finance; all contributing to our industry.

One of the identified barriers to a woman's success in her career is underselling herself and not having the confidence to put herself "out there". The first guest speaker following the icebreaker and networking exercise was LinkedIn specialist Judy Parsons. She explained the importance of building your personal brand, community, and collaboration on LinkedIn, detailing why keeping your profile up to date, being



clear on what you do and aspire to do are all important.

Following a delicious hot lunch, we were treated to several industry speakers: Michelle Buckland, Chief Commercial Officer at Miro Forestry; Claire Toomey, Head of Sustainability and ESG Lead at Howdens Joinery; Camilla Fish, Managing Director of SCA Products UK; and Rosie Wise of Benchmarx Kitchen & Joinery. It was fascinating to hear their stories, about what they do, and what they have

overcome to get where they are.

Following the talks and questions, a raffle was held on behalf of the Timber Trades' Benevolent Society.

This was a very well attended event and the enthusiasm and energy from the room of women who want to support each other to grow and develop was fantastic. I fully expect the next event to be even busier and buzzing next time.

Elaine Heckley MICFor, Confor National Manager for Wales

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Breakthrough in squirrel fertility control research

Animal and Plant Health Agency researchers funded by the UK Squirrel Accord and supporters has attained a world first for wildlife fertility control. Positive news for a programme aiming to find a non-lethal option for invasive grey squirrel management.



A multi-year research programme being delivered by the Animal and Plant Health Agency (APHA) has resulted in a scientific breakthrough by achieving infertility in rats through free feeding of an oral immunocontraceptive – a world first.

The research ultimately aims to develop a vaccine-based contraceptive and species-specific feeder to reduce grey squirrel numbers for the protection of UK red squirrels, trees and woodland ecosystems. The formula has also succeeded in achieving a reaction in grey squirrels and research is ongoing to refine the formula to increase effectiveness.

Fertility control is increasingly used around the world as a safe and non-lethal option to tackle wildlife problems. The APHA team is redesigning injectable immunocontraceptive vaccine technology, already used to manage other mammals, into an oral formula that can be delivered via feeding hoppers only accessible by grey squirrels. This contraceptive affects an animal's immune system to prevent it creating the sex hormones and causes infertility in both males and females.

Bex Pinkham, Mammal Subject Lead for APHA, said: "I'm really encouraged by the progress we've made in our research so far as part of this important partnership project. These breakthroughs are a positive step forward towards a grey squirrel management tool that will mean so much for our UK woodlands."

Developing a formula that can survive

the body's digestive processes and still make it into the bloodstream is a real challenge. A key part of the research is combining the contraceptive with components that provide protection before delivery through the lining of the gut.

The research does this using natural capsules made from plant spores created by Sporomex Ltd – a technique already used in clinical studies to deliver vitamin D to human volunteers. These capsules protect the active contraceptive ingredient while also being kind to the environment.

APHA is also collaborating with experts from the Roslin Institute and MV Diagnostics to increase the scale and duration of the effect of the immunocontraceptive vaccine to make it suitable for use in the wild.

In a statement, MV Diagnostics said: "We are excited to be involved in this groundbreaking research. Developing an immunocontraceptive that could be used in this way has major implications for the ethical control of problem mammals."

The final product must remain stable and effective once put into the species-specific feeder. The feeders being developed include one with a weighing platform that electronically opens the door only if the animal is within a certain weight range. This makes it specific to adult grey squirrels, which are heavier than reds.

Lord Kinnoull, Chair of UKSA, said: "This is a major step forward for our

research. We understand that many people want to see this product available tomorrow. However, we must ensure that what is created is effective and that takes time. This will be the world's first oral free-feeding immunocontraceptive and its potential for mammal management is significant."

Research of this scale would not be possible without the generosity of contributions from UK Squirrel Accord (UKSA) signatories, grant-making organisations and private individuals and estates. The donors are motivated by their understanding of the benefits of a new management method for UK grey squirrels, as well as wider potential opportunities for problematic mammal species management.

Vanessa Fawcett, Red Squirrel Survival Trust Campaign Director, said: "Fundraising has begun for the next stage of this groundbreaking research project, to bring an effective and affordable grey squirrel oral fertility control system to market.

"Active dialogue is underway with current donors and new donors are being sought, to support the further refinement and development of the vital work being done at the Animal & Plant Health Agency.

"Our vision is for our native red squirrel populations to be secure and expanded beyond their current strongholds, and to see our woodlands flourishing, continuing to deliver multiple benefits for future generations."

ICF course opens up UK Forestry Standard to non-foresters

The Institute of Chartered Foresters (ICF) has launched a new online training course designed to bring the best practice principles of the UK Forestry Standard to non-foresters.

The course is based on the technical standard for sustainable forestry in the UK, which is not widely known or accessed outside of the forestry sector, and yet its principles should form the basis for any decision-making involving trees and woodlands.

The one-hour training course delivers, via an engaging and easy-to-use platform, valuable insights and guidance on sustainable forestry practices to forestry-adjacent professionals, including farmers, landowners, conservationists, environmentalists, climate professionals, businesses and investors in natural capital, local authority planners, policy officers, and others whose roles involve the management of trees and woodlands.

Louise Simpson, Executive Director at the Institute of Chartered Foresters, commented: "I am so pleased that we are able to launch the UKFS for

Non-Foresters online training. The UK Forestry Standard underpins everything we do as a profession, but it is vitally important that allied professionals – landowners, ecologists, planners, surveyors, environmental groups and many others – have a working knowledge of this framework.

"The more people who understand the principles of sustainable forestry, the stronger and more resilient our sector will become.

"This course is about opening doors and making the UKFS accessible, so that anyone with an interest in woodlands can feel confident engaging with forestry. By broadening understanding beyond our own sector, we are helping to tell the story of a diverse and vibrant forestry industry, ensuring that good woodland management is embedded across the UK."



Features and benefits of the UKFS for Non-Foresters training course include:

- **Encouraging cross-sector engagement:** The UKFS isn't just for foresters – it affects farming, conservation, planning, land-use policy and many other sectors. This course is vital for anyone whose work involves trees, woodlands and forests.
- **Making the UK forestry sector's technical standard more accessible:** Designed for non-foresters, the course offers a concise, essential introduction to the principles that underpin tree planting, woodland creation and sustainable land management in the UK.
- **Providing quick and easy access to insights and knowledge:** With just one hour of learning, the course removes barriers to engagement and encourages wider understanding of the key principles of sustainable forest management.



New senior appointments at RTS Forestry

RTS Forestry Ltd has announced three senior appointments, with Sandy Pringle and Mike Coles joining the board as Directors, and Ross Kennedy being promoted to Joint Managing Director.

Sandy and Mike took up their posts, as Forestry Director and Woodfuel Director respectively, on 1 October. Ross, previously Senior Director, has stepped up to Joint Managing Director alongside Norman O'Neill as part of the long-term succession planning for the business.

Norman said: "This is a very exciting time for the company. The appointments of Mike and Sandy to the board along with Ross's move to joint MD reflect our confidence in the ongoing development of RTS Forestry and our plans for the future.

"We continue to be seen throughout the industry and across the country as a leading forestry management company. Our additional and

important specialisms in energy infrastructure, consultancy and woodfuel complementing our core services of forest management and timber harvesting.

Ross added: "Following the successful transition in ownership of RTS Forestry to the Scottish Woodlands Ltd (SWL) group in December 2024, we have seen continuing company growth and expansion across all the divisions of RTS Forestry's business.

"This has been achieved solely through the continued commitment of our dedicated staff across our four offices in Hexham, Inverurie, Inverness and Crieff. These appointments demonstrate the faith the Boards of RTS and SWL place in all the staff within RTS. I very much look forward to continuing to develop the business, and working alongside the enhanced board and the RTS management team."

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A great forester and friend

Jamie Farquhar, former Confor National Manager for Scotland, reflects on the life of James Hepburne Scott OBE, with contributions from Lt-Gen Sir Alistair Irwin KCB CBE.

Soldier, Member of the Royal Company of Archers (KBGS), Musician, Politician, Oarsman, Country Sportsman, Agronomist, Lover of Nature, Forester, Salesman, Husband, Father, Grandfather, Godfather, Friend to so many. James was indeed a genuine phenomenon.

Brought up in Lanarkshire, James went to prep school at Aysgarth in Yorkshire where he became a keen rifle shot and learnt to play the fiddle. At Eton College he excelled at rowing and easily made many life-long friends. In fact, friendship is something we will all associate James with – for he attracted people to him like bees to honey.

After school he attended the Royal Military Academy at Sandhurst and passed out as Senior Under Officer. He was commissioned into The Black Watch in 1967 and spent 12 years proudly wearing the Red Hackle, demonstrating talents that were immediately recognised by his superiors.

Serving on the Royal Guard at Balmoral demonstrated James' unerring ability to get on with both Royalty and commoners alike. His quality of leadership and energy also ensured loyalty and enthusiasm from all he commanded. It was during the regiment's tour of Hong Kong that he and Christian were married. Too young to qualify for a married officer's quarter, they lived in a new block of flats in Kowloon – on Man Fuk Road...!

After leaving service, James spent a year at the Royal Agricultural College at Cirencester and then took a job as Regional Sales Manager with Rank Hovis McDougall. Moving to live in the Lothians, he then worked as Sales Manager with Grainfax. It was during that time that his interest in politics led him to be adopted in 1990 as the Conservative candidate for East Lothian ahead of the 1992 election, though he was in the end narrowly beaten by the longstanding Labour member.

In 1992 James and Christian bought Larkhill – a 220-acre farm above Lauder where they built a charming

home, and he immediately planted 40 acres of woodland which he nurtured with love and professionalism. By this time, he was Regional Manager for the Agricultural Mortgage Corporation and was consolidating a profound knowledge of farming and countryside matters.

He joined the Board of Alba Trees and was soon appointed Executive Sales Director. Readers of Forestry & Timber News will know how, alongside Rodney Shearer, he helped the nursery develop into the largest supplier of cell grown trees in the UK. He was a phenomenal salesman.

At the same time he was Scottish Chairman of the Forestry & Timber Association and was a key player in the formation of Confor as we know it today, serving on its Board for several years.

Never satisfied with the status quo, and with the idea of assisting new woodland creation, he formed Forest Carbon with Steve Prior in 2006. They helped to make the case for a woodland carbon standard and worked with the Forestry Commission to develop the Woodland Carbon Code published in 2011.

James' son George joined Steve at Forest Carbon in 2016 and the business has since enabled the planting of 13 million trees under the Code, and the restoration of 2,000 hectares of degraded peatland.

Meanwhile, James went on to become President of the Royal Scottish Forestry Society from 2016 to 2019, was elected an Honorary Fellow of the Institute of Chartered Foresters in 2016, and chaired the Tweed Forum between 2015 and 2020. Little wonder that in 2023 he was awarded the OBE in the King's New Year Honours for Services to Forestry and the Environment in Scotland.

When James and Christian moved down to Ford House in Wiltshire, no one will be surprised to learn that – as one local said – they made more friends in two years than he had in thirty. James lived by the ethos of wanting to make



the world a better place. He certainly did that, and enlightened the lives of all of who knew him at work and at play.

As well as Christian, his loving wife of 53 years, he leaves three children – Wattie, Emily and George – and seven grandchildren – Matilda, William, Clemmie, Kitty, Martha, Robin and Hector.

James will be hugely missed by all of us in the UK world of forestry – and also in the wider rural environment. We owe him buckets and long may his legacy live on.

Motives for ownership and management



Julian Evans shares a moving reflection on the non-commercial benefits of owning a small woodland.

Over the summer I came across a piece in The Times (8 August 2025) - on page 7 of their weekly supplement headed 'Bricks & Mortar' - entitled 'Our woodland has helped us to grieve'. It describes a father and two children who suffered the loss of their partner and mother from sepsis and how, some years later, they bought a small woodland in her memory.

Their wood, paid for by from an entitlement they fought for, but hadn't really expected, has proven something of a restorative for them in their grief.

I wrote earlier this year about buying very small woods, woods of 1-3 ha, and the new community of owners who almost always want to manage them in

ways that will mostly help biodiversity, conserve traditional practices, and build 'a new cadre of forestry interest'. But this recent Times article showed how owning such woods can offer even more.

I'd like to draw out three points. They each come indirectly from the article.

The first is the cost: the family paid for their wood roughly the same as for a large family car. We know the figures of £5,000-£15,000 per acre or even higher if there are especially attractive features like a stream, veteran trees or even a bit of 'meadow' included, as ancient woodlands can sometimes have. But is this good value?

Hardened forestry types will know such figures are 'retail' and way above 'wholesale' value of plantations, but of course the purchaser is not looking for Yield Class and timber production but, as in The Times' article case, comfort and consolation. And how do you value that? One can buy a car anytime, but a wood not so far from home that is your very own is, in a sense, priceless.

This leads to the second point made: the woodland that was bought was a 10-minute drive away. This sort of distance is critical because a wood that is perhaps an hour's drive to reach means nipping over for a quick visit to get or check something, or just fitting

in a morning's or afternoon's work isn't practicable. It means each visit becomes more like an expedition to be planned and organised.

Of course, this in itself can be enjoyable and become part of the pleasure of ownership, but spontaneity can't be.

The third point is naming the wood, and this clearly was a way of commemorating the person they had loved. It was not using her name as such but derived from a book she had much loved.

In my own patch, part is named after my mother and called 'Nain's Copse' - 'nain' being Welsh for grandmother and was how she was known by my sons. And as I have mentioned before, the most precious and oldest tree, a pollarded oak around 270 years old, is named after my late wife - 'Mum's Oak' (pictured).

You will have realised how much I identified with the experience of the family whose account appeared in The Times. I guess that sums up what owning a small wood is really about, namely relationships, and how a tiny corner of God's creation can be such a blessing. As is often said, a wood is far more than the sum of its trees. What a privilege to be stewards or custodians of one.



Photo credit: Arbortec.

Forestry England's investment has enabled a range of female fit workwear to be developed by manufacturer Arbortec. The design and production process has involved extensive testing and feedback from female forest workers for the first time.

Through the collaboration, two versions of women's-fit chainsaw trousers are being launched. The top range (called Breatheflex Pro) are available now alongside work jackets; a mid-range version of the chainsaw trousers will be following soon. Chainsaw gloves and boots are set to join the collection over the next few months when designs are finalised.

This positive step tackles longstanding workplace challenges in forestry, where female workers have made do with men's equipment. Forestry England's female forest workers have shared experiences of being swamped in extra-small men's shirts, constantly adjusting oversized sleeves, and using tape to secure loose men's chainsaw trousers.

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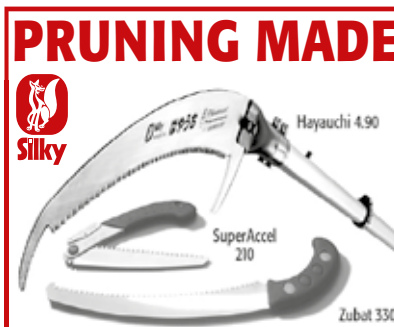
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COMING UP IN DEC 25 / JAN 26 – GET INVOLVED

In our December 25 / January 26 issue we will be focusing on Professional Services and Policy & Political Engagement. Remember that FTN is your magazine – get in touch if you want to suggest editorial or give us feedback on articles we have published in the past. Confor members, send us your company's news updates or pitches for feature articles.

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