



## DEBATE PACK

Number CDP 1016/0241, 2 December 2016

# Tree planting in the UK

This pack has been prepared ahead of the debate to be held in Westminster Hall on Wednesday 7 December 2016 at 9.30am. The debate will be opened by Chris Davies MP.

The House of Commons Library prepares a briefing in hard copy and/or online for most non-legislative debates in the Chamber and Westminster Hall other than half-hour debates. Debate Packs are produced quickly after the announcement of parliamentary business. They are intended to provide a summary or overview of the issue being debated and identify relevant briefings and useful documents, including press and parliamentary material. More detailed briefing can be prepared for Members on request to the Library.

Sara Priestley  
Nikki Sutherland

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# 1. Library summary

## Summary

- The Forestry Commission reported in June 2016 on woodland and tree planting across the UK. This report showed the lowest level of tree planting in the UK for more than five years, and some organisations have raised concerns that the Government is not on track to achieve its commitment to plant 11 million trees by 2020.
- The main findings of the Forestry Commission's report were:
  - The area of woodland in the UK at 31 March 2016 is 3.16 million hectares. This represents 13% of the total land area in the UK, 10% in England, 15% in Wales, 18% in Scotland and 8% in Northern Ireland.
  - Of the total UK woodland area, 0.86 million hectares is owned or managed by the Forestry Commission (in England and Scotland), Natural Resources Wales or the Forest Service (in Northern Ireland).
  - The total certified woodland area in the UK at 31 March 2016 is 1.35 million hectares. Overall, 43% of the UK woodland area is certified.
  - 6,000 ha of newly created woodland were reported in the UK in 2015-16, mostly with broadleaved species.
  - 14,000 ha of woodland restocking were reported in the UK in 2015-16, mostly with conifers.
- Forestry is a devolved matter. Forestry Commission England; Forestry Commission Scotland; Natural Resources Wales; and the Forest Service (NI) are the relevant Government agencies responsible for managing woodlands in each respective country.

## 1.1 UK woodland cover

### Tree planting and restocking trends

The Forestry Commission collect and publish national statistics for the whole of the UK (England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland) on the area, in hectares (ha), of new and re-stocked woodland planting.<sup>1</sup> The latest figures were published in June 2016 and report that the total amount of new planting and restocking in the UK in 2015-2016 was 19,100 ha.

The Forestry Commission summarised its main findings as follows:

- The area of woodland in the UK at 31 March 2016 is 3.16 million hectares. This represents 13% of the total land area in the UK, 10% in England, 15% in Wales, 18% in Scotland and 8% in Northern Ireland.
- Of the total UK woodland area, 0.86 million hectares is owned or managed by the Forestry Commission (in England and Scotland), Natural Resources Wales or the Forest Service (in Northern Ireland).
- The total certified woodland area in the UK at 31 March 2016 is 1.35 million hectares, including all Forestry Commission/Natural Resources Wales/Forest Service woodland. Overall, 43% of the UK woodland area is certified.

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<sup>1</sup> Forestry Commission, "[Woodland Area, Planting and Restocking—2016 edition](#)," (16 June 2016)

- Six thousand hectares of newly created woodland were reported in the UK in 2015-16, mostly with broadleaved species.
- Fourteen thousand hectares of woodland restocking were reported in the UK in 2015-16, mostly with conifers.<sup>2</sup>

From this publication, [Forestry Commission data](#) (Tables 3 and 4) reports that the total amount of new planting and re-stocking in England in the year to March 2016 was 4,000 ha, compared with 12,500 ha in Scotland; 1,900 ha in Wales; and 800 ha in Northern Ireland. All these figures were down from the previous year.

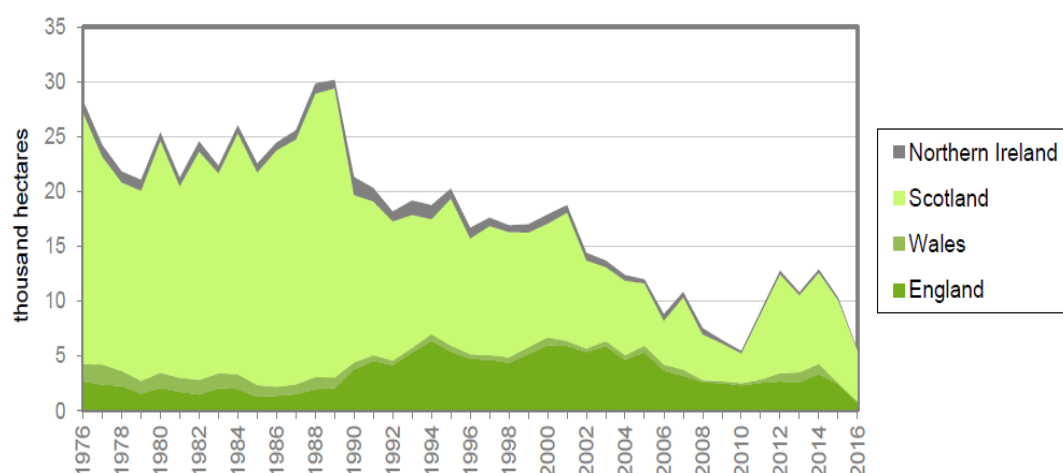
### Woodland Area, Planting and Restocking, 2012-2016 (000s ha)

Year	England	Wales	Northern		UK
			Scotland	Ireland	
2012	6.3	2.8	14.7	1.3	25.1
2013	6.6	2.9	13.0	1.5	23.9
2014	7.8	3.2	16.2	1.5	28.7
2015	8.8	2.0	16.1	1.0	27.9
2016	4.0	1.9	12.4	0.8	19.1

Source: Forestry Commission

The longer term trends for new planting can be seen in the following chart extracted from the Forestry Commission report. New planting across the whole of the UK has declined considerably since the mid-1970s. While there was an increase in new planting in England in the early 1990s that has also declined, and 2016 has had the fewest new trees planted on record:

Figure 3: Area of new planting, 1976 to 2016



Source: Forestry Commission, Natural Resources Wales, Forest Service, grant schemes.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

## Response to Forestry Commission Report

The [Woodland Trust responded to the Forestry Commission Report](#), stating that it was “appalled by the continued drastic decline in new woodland planting.”<sup>3</sup> Moreover, the Trust’s Director of Conservation and External Affairs, said:

These figures are all the more shocking against the backdrop of the growing evidence of the importance of trees and woods in tackling air pollution, improving water quality and offering scope to deliver natural flood management, not to mention what they offer for wildlife and their productive potential for the rural economy. Something is drastically wrong with the way woodland planting is being supported across the various government departments that share responsibility for trees and woods.<sup>4</sup>

The Confederation of Forest Industries (ConFor) (a private forestry industry membership body) claimed that the new figures on woodland creation mean that the Government will not manage to plant 11 million trees by 2020 unless it takes radical action:

The new figures show that the Conservative Government will fail to deliver its manifesto commitment to plant 11 million trees between 2015 and 2020 unless it takes radical action now.<sup>5</sup>

## 1.2 Forestry policy

Forestry is a devolved matter. The Secretary of State for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs has responsibility for forestry in England as well as certain activities such as international affairs and plant health which remain reserved by Westminster.

### England

Forestry Commission England is the non-Ministerial Government department responsible for managing woodlands. The Coalition Government published a [Forestry Policy Statement](#)<sup>6</sup> in January 2013. This statement presented a “refreshed” policy based around a clear hierarchy of priorities: protecting, improving and expanding public and private woodland assets.<sup>7</sup> The [Conservative Party Manifesto \(2015\)](#) stated that the Coalition Government planted 11 million trees over the course of its 5-year term.<sup>8</sup>

The current Government made a commitment to plant another 11 million trees over the course of the Parliament in its Manifesto and then in the 2015 Autumn Statement.<sup>9</sup> Defra Minister, Lord Gardiner of

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<sup>3</sup> Woodland Trust, [“Lowest tree planting figures in a generation in England”](#), 16 June 2016

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> Confor, [“Forestry Sector criticises ‘woeful’ tree planting figures,”](#) Accessed: 15 November 2016

<sup>6</sup> Defra, [Government Forestry and Woodlands Policy Statement](#), January 2013

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

<sup>8</sup> [Conservative Party Manifesto 2015](#), p54 [accessed 30 November 2016]

<sup>9</sup> Ibid., and HM Treasury, [Spending review and autumn statement](#) 2015, 27 November 2015 [accessed 30 November 2016]

Kimble, reaffirmed this commitment in answer to a [PO on 19 September 2016](#).<sup>10</sup>

New woodland planting in England is supported by the Rural Development Programme Countryside Stewardship woodland creation grant scheme.<sup>11</sup>

On 25 July 2016, [Defra Minister, Dr Therese Coffey, explained](#) further how the Government was encouraging tree planting and detailed the grants available for that purpose:

The Government is committed to planting 11 million trees in England during this Parliament, and is also supporting the planting of a million trees by schoolchildren, in partnership with the Woodland Trust. Individual administrations within the UK determine their own ambitions for tree planting.

In England, we encourage tree planting by championing sector-led initiatives, such as Grown in Britain and the Roots to Prosperity strategy, in their work to grow demand for wood from ground level up, developing the woodland economy. We also support the Woodland Carbon Code to help to attract private investment in woodland creation.

Grants are available from the Forestry Commission under the EU funded Woodland Creation Grant in the Rural Development Programme for England. Until negotiations conclude and the UK leaves the EU, all existing arrangements remain in place, including the rural development programme. We are working with the Treasury to ensure continuity, particularly for agri-environment schemes, but without prejudice to future decisions.<sup>12</sup>

The current Government has committed to develop a 25-year plan for the environment, which may contain more detail on forestry policy and tree planting.<sup>13</sup>

The Environment, Food and Rural Affairs Select Committee launched an inquiry on [Forestry in England](#) in July 2016. Its terms of reference include how effectively current Government policies achieve an increase in the level of tree cover in England; and how such policies can be developed in the future. The Committee is currently taking oral evidence.

## Wales

Natural Resources Wales (NRW) was formed in April 2013 and has taken over the functions previously carried out by Forestry Commission Wales, including managing woodlands in Wales.<sup>14</sup>

The Welsh Government would like to see 100,000 ha of new woodland by 2030.<sup>15</sup> To meet this aspiration, 5000 ha of additional woodland cover

<sup>10</sup> [Tree Planting: Written question - HL1726](#) (Answered on 19 September 2016)

<sup>11</sup> [Tree Planting: Written question – 50056](#) (Answered 28 October 2016)

<sup>12</sup> [Tree Planting: Written question - 43052](#) (Answered on 25 July 2016)

<sup>13</sup> [Environment Protection: Written question - 46288](#) (Answered 20 September 2016)

<sup>14</sup> Natural Resources Wales, [What we do](#) [accessed 30 November 2016]

<sup>15</sup> This aspiration is set out in the Wales Climate Change Strategy published in 2010.

per annum would need to be planted from 2010 to 2030—this would be a higher level of planting than previously achieved in Wales.<sup>16</sup>

The [Woodland for Wales forestry strategy](#) sets out key outcomes for Wales, including increasing woodland cover. It is accompanied by a series of Action Plans, the current action plan runs until 31 March 2020.<sup>17</sup>

There are currently two main Welsh government schemes supporting trees and woodlands:

[Glastir Woodland Creation](#) and [Glastir Small Grants](#).

In 2008, the Welsh Government pledged to plant a tree for every child born or adopted in Wales. This project is known as [Plant!](#)

## Scotland

Forestry Commission Scotland is the non-Ministerial Government department responsible for managing woodlands.<sup>18</sup> Forestry Commission Scotland's mission is "to protect and expand Scotland's forests and woodlands and increase their value to society and the environment."<sup>19</sup>

The first Scottish Forestry Strategy was launched in 2000 and guided the development of Scotland's expanding forest and woodland area. The current [Scottish Forestry Strategy](#) was launched on 9 October 2006.<sup>20</sup> An [implementation Plan \(2015-18\) and Progress Report \(2014-15\)](#) lays out directions for 2015-2018 by theme.<sup>21</sup>

As part of the Forestry Strategy, by the second half of the 21st century, the Forestry Commission Scotland want to expand woodland cover from 17 per cent to around 25 per cent of Scotland's land area. In order to deliver this Scottish Natural Heritage have calculated that between 10,000 and 15,000 ha of new woodland will have to be created each year including 2000 ha on the national forest estate.<sup>22</sup>

The [Forestry Grant Scheme](#) was opened on 30 March 2015<sup>23</sup> and makes grants available for planting trees and managing woodlands in Scotland.

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<sup>16</sup> Welsh Government, [Woodlands for Wales Action Plan](#), p22 [accessed 30 November 2016]

<sup>17</sup> Welsh Government, [Woodlands for Wales Action Plan](#) [accessed 30 November 2016]

<sup>18</sup> Forestry Commission, [What we do – how we work](#) [accessed 15 November 2016]

<sup>19</sup> Forestry Commission Scotland, ["The Scottish Forestry Strategy"](#). Accessed: 15 November 2016

<sup>20</sup> Forestry Commission Scotland, ["The Scottish Forestry Strategy"](#). Accessed: 15 November 2016

<sup>21</sup> Forestry Commission Scotland, [The Scottish Forestry Strategy: Progress Report \(2014-15\) and Future Implementation](#), 2015, p. 8

<sup>22</sup> Scottish Natural Heritage, ["Expanding Scotland's woods and forests"](#), Accessed: 15 November 2016

<sup>23</sup> Forestry Commission Scotland, ["Forestry Grant Scheme"](#), Accessed: 15 November 2016

## Northern Ireland

In Northern Ireland, the Forest Service is an executive agency within the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs, responsible for promoting the sustainable management of forests.<sup>24</sup>

The [Northern Ireland Forestry Strategy for Sustainability and Growth](#) was published in 2006 and aims for a steady expansion of tree cover with a broad aim to double the area of forest over the next 50 years.

The main schemes expected to support tree planting in Northern Ireland are: the Forest Expansion Scheme; and the Environmental Farming Scheme.<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs, [Forest Service](#) [accessed 30 November 2016]

<sup>25</sup> See [Farm Woodlands Grant schemes](#) for further information on grants.

## 2. News items

Telegraph

**Tories set to miss manifesto promise to plant 11 million trees**

26 November 2016

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2016/11/26/tories-set-miss-manifesto-promise-plant-11-million-trees/>

Scottish Farmer

**UK flood report calls for more tree planting**

7 November 2016

[http://www.thescottishfarmer.co.uk/news/14849849.UK\\_flood\\_report\\_calls\\_for\\_more\\_tree\\_planting/](http://www.thescottishfarmer.co.uk/news/14849849.UK_flood_report_calls_for_more_tree_planting/)

Farming UK

**Farming Connect: Potential of tree and hedgerow planting to reduce frequency and impact of flood events**

3 November 2016

[https://www.farminguk.com/news/Farming-Connect-Potential-of-tree-and-hedgerow-planting-to-reduce-frequency-and-impact-of-flood-events\\_44697.html](https://www.farminguk.com/news/Farming-Connect-Potential-of-tree-and-hedgerow-planting-to-reduce-frequency-and-impact-of-flood-events_44697.html)

BBC

**Growth of city trees can cut air pollution, says report**

Mark Kinver 31 October 2016

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/science-environment-37813709>

Horticulture Week

**Boosts to rural tree planting in Scotland and Wales**

Gavin McEwan 27 October 2016

<http://www.hortweek.com/boosts-rural-tree-planting-scotland-wales/arboriculture/article/1413738>

BBC

**More tree planting in Wales 'critical' warns industry**

17 August 2016

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-wales-33964648>

Observer

**How millions of trees brought a broken landscape back to life**

John Vidal 7 August 2016

<https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2016/aug/07/national-forest-woodland-midlands-regeneration>



Farmers Weekly

**Grow trees, not sheep, for better return from Welsh uplands**

Suzie Horne 22 July 2015

<http://www.fwi.co.uk/business/grow+trees-not+sheep-for-better-return-from-welsh-uplands.htm>

Politics Home

**Deforestation Likely? Lowest tree planting figures in England in a generation**

16 June 2016

<https://www.politicshome.com/news/uk/environment/environmental-protection/press-release/woodland-trust/76239/deforestation-likely>

BBC

**Is there any point in planting new trees?**

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/science-environment-36078295>

Isabella Kaminski 12 May 2016

BBC

**Tree planting 'can reduce flooding'**

Roger Harrabin 11 March 2016

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/science-environment-35777927>

## 3. Press releases

### **One Million Trees in One Day/Woodland Trust**

#### **Tree-planting blitz: all in a day's work**

**31 October 2016**

Farmers, smallholders and organisations are invited to roll their sleeves up for a massive tree-planting venture.

The offer comes from *One Million Trees in One Day*, a charity and cross-border initiative, which aims to see a million young native trees planted at sites right across the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland – and all in the space of 24 hours.

Would-be tree planters can apply online now for packs of 50 native saplings, enough to create a small woodland or hedgerow<sup>1</sup>.

The packs, which are subsidised, are available for a modest application fee of €21 or (at the time of writing) £18.89. They will be delivered to local collection points in readiness for the big planting day: Saturday 11 February 2017.

*Imogen Rabone is the project co-ordinator and says: "Both Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland are very short on native trees and woodland. We want to help people plant their own trees in both rural and urban areas, and with a focus on small sites.*

*"We've been testing the water in recent years, and know that the interest is there. During its pilot phase, 2013 to 2016, the project has helped to plant over 650,000 native trees at more than 3,000 sites right across the island of Ireland. We're now pulling out all the stops to reach the big target: the planting of one million trees in one day."*

The initiative has been developed in collaboration with the Irish Natural Forestry Foundation in the Republic of Ireland, and is supported by the Woodland Trust in Northern Ireland.

*Gregor Fulton, operations manager with the Woodland Trust, adds: "Trees and woodland offer so much, from brightening neighbourhoods to providing shelter for crops and livestock. This is an excellent opportunity for people who don't have huge areas of land to plant and who, for example, just want to strengthen a hedgerow or create a copse. We really hope that local people will be encouraged to get planting and, with just a minimal fee, it won't be too hard on the back pocket."*

Applications close on Saturday 31 December. Trees will be allocated on a first-come first-served basis. To apply for trees or to simply find out more visit [www.onemilliontreesinoneday.com](http://www.onemilliontreesinoneday.com)

*One Million Trees in One Day*

One Million Trees in One Day is a not-for-profit, cross-border, community and environmental initiative which aims to plant a million

young native trees at many different sites across both the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland in 24 hours. The initiative has been developed in collaboration with the Irish Natural Forestry Foundation in the Republic of Ireland, with support from the Woodland Trust in Northern Ireland.

See [www.onemilliontreesinoneday.com](http://www.onemilliontreesinoneday.com) for more information about the project and for details on applications for trees.

Trees will be delivered to local collection points for pick-up.

*Tree packs available for 2017:*

*Woodland Pack:* 50 mixed native trees for a small woodland (Approx 1/10th of an acre) or for several smaller plots. Species to include appropriate mixes of oak, hazel, alder, rowan, birch, crab apple and scots pine.

*Coppice Pack:* 50 mixed native trees for a small coppice (Approx 1/10th of an acre). Species to include appropriate mixes of oak, hazel, alder and birch.

*Hedge Pack:* 50 mixed hedge plants for 10m or more of hedgerow or to fill gaps in existing hedges. Species to include appropriate mixes of hawthorn, blackthorn, hazel, crab apple and oak.

*Agroforestry Pack:* 50 trees of an appropriate species or species mix for low density planting of rows and groups of trees across arable and or pasture land. Species to include oak, scots pine, alder, birch, hazel, hawthorn, blackthorn and crab apple as appropriate.

*The Woodland Trust* is the largest woodland conservation charity in the UK. It has over 500,000 supporters.

The Trust has three key aims:

- i) to protect ancient woodland, which is rare, unique and irreplaceable
- ii) to restore damaged ancient woodland, bringing precious pieces of our natural history back to life
- iii) to plant native trees and woods with the aim of creating resilient landscapes for people and wildlife.

Established in 1972, the Woodland Trust now has over 1,000 sites in its care covering over 22,500 hectares. Access to its woods is free. Further news can be found at [www.woodlandtrust.org.uk](http://www.woodlandtrust.org.uk)

## London Assembly

### News from Tony Arbour: Mayor ditches promise to plant two million trees by 2020

**13 October 2016**

Sadiq Khan u-turns on major environmental pledge

The Mayor of London has ditched a key election promise to plant two million trees by 2020.

Sadiq Khan's new Deputy Mayor for Environment, Shirley Rodrigues, dropped the bombshell during her first meeting with the London Assembly's Environment Committee this morning.

Responding to a question from London Assembly member Tony Arbour, Ms Rodrigues said the two million target would be dropped and there would instead be an attempt to 'increase tree coverage by five per cent by 2025'.

The Deputy Mayor denied the two million target was one of Sadiq Khan's manifesto promises, claiming it 'was not in his printed manifesto'. However, the pledge was [published on his campaign website](#) and was widely publicised in the media.

The u-turn saw Sadiq Khan's tree-planting target chopped by more than three quarters in one morning.

According to a report last year by the London [i-Tree Eco Project](#), the capital currently has an estimated 8,421,000 trees – plummeting the Mayor's tree-planting target from two million to 420,000, with a five year extension.

Conservative London Assembly member [Tony Arbour](#) said:

"This is quite a staggering about turn, even for a Mayor who has already broken at least seven election promises.

"Not only is this a hugely disappointing announcement from an environmental point of view, it will do nothing for the general public's trust in what the Mayor has to say.

"This morning's u-turn makes it clear the Mayor is unwilling and unable to tackle what is a serious problem for Londoners and raises questions over what other issues he will attempt to dodge in the coming months and years.

"Sadiq Khan constantly claims he wants to reduce emissions in London but it seems the largest density of hot air was spouting from his mouth during the election campaign."

## Woodland Trust

### Our 64 million tree goal

**20 September 2016**

*64,000,000 - it's a big number.*

But over the next ten years we have given ourselves a very big target - to plant a tree for every person in the UK. And that's around 64 million!

The reason? Because everyone needs trees - to breathe, to enjoy, to relax in.

"Our goals are to work with schools, partners and communities to plant 15 million trees in towns and cities. To work with farmers and local authorities to plant 20 million trees in the countryside. And to work with businesses, major landowners and the Government to plant 29 million trees."

In just ten years, for example, [Sainsbury's has planted over 2.5 million trees](#), backing projects such as [our First World War Centenary Woods project](#) and bringing the special gift of nature with free trees to hundreds of schools across the UK.

IKEA FAMILY, meanwhile, celebrated [funding a million trees for communities](#) through our free tree pack scheme last month. And in the process, they created dozens of inspiring stories.

*Why more trees?*

Trees and woods are a cornerstone of our landscape and countryside, crucial not only as homes for wildlife and nature, but also forming an essential and cherished part of our cultural identity.

However, our trees and woods face real challenges. Today, they face the perfect storm of climate change, pests and diseases and constant destructive pressures from development, over grazing and intensive land use.

This compounds the problems our environment already faces, having lost so much woodland over the centuries - leaving small and fragmented woods that are more vulnerable, and less likely to recover from further harm or damage.

*How do we combat these threats to our trees, woods and cherished landscapes?*

How do we equip our landscape to be more able to bounce back from all these impacts and to ensure that we will have native trees, woods and wildlife for future generations to enjoy?

Protecting the woods we have got and planting a wider range of native trees are both essential in preparing our landscapes for the future.

This means having a broader mix of tree species, having a more diverse woodland structure and a good range of trees of different ages and stages of life. We also want to have better networks of connected woodland habitat that allows natural regeneration of woods and give

more opportunities for wildlife to move around the landscape and colonise and re-colonise new areas.

But to really make the difference, we will have to go much further than that.

The Woodland Trust's plans for the next ten years include increasing tree planting across the whole countryside in a wide range of circumstances: not just planting whole new woods but tens of thousands of new trees in hedgerows, along roadsides, riversides, in school grounds, close to communities and in towns. This means millions of new trees - delivering this project will be a major piece of work and businesses will be so important to this.

This will mean getting the right kind of tree planting and new woodland into the right places - and working with a wide range of communities, landowners and partners to deliver it.

*Our goals for 2025 are big and bold*

- Working with schools, communities and partners will see 15 million trees planted in towns and cities: creating attractive parks and green spaces, improving air quality, boosting health and wellbeing, and creating places where people want to live and work
- Working with farmers, landowners, local authorities, communities and supporters will see 20 million new trees across the countryside, replacing the many that will be lost to tree disease
- Working with major landowners, government and businesses and tapping into new funding streams will see 29 million trees, creating major new areas of beautiful and wildlife-friendly countryside

Taken together this adds up to 64 million trees - that's just about one tree for every person in Britain. That is a good number, because, after all 'we all need trees'.

## **Woodland Trust**

### **Lowest tree planting figures in a generation in England**

**16 June 2016**

In the UK as a whole 2015-2016 there was 5,500 ha of new planting. The Woodland Trust is appalled by the continued drastic decline in new woodland planting confirmed in official figures today.

The figures released [today](#) (page 11) show only 700 hectares of woodland was planted in England last year, far below the Government and Forestry Commission (FC) aim of 5000 hectares, with the FC missing its goal by 86% percent. In comparison 2,400 hectares was

planted in 2014-2015, but planting in England has been consistently low, at under 5000 hectares a year since 2006.

*The Trust's Austin Brady, Director of Conservation and External Affairs said:*

"These figures are all the more shocking against the backdrop of the growing evidence of the importance of trees and woods in tackling air pollution, improving water quality and offering scope to deliver natural flood management, not to mention what they offer for wildlife and their productive potential for the rural economy. Something is drastically wrong with the way woodland planting is being supported across the various government departments that share responsibility for trees and woods."

Woodland cover in England stands at just 10 per cent. England is important because it is the stronghold of native broadleaf trees which offer the greatest range of biodiversity benefits. The Government's aspiration is to work with the forestry sector to achieve 12% woodland cover by 2060. This means an average planting rate of 5000 hectares a year.

*Brady continued:*

"On top of poor planting rates, woodland losses, and weak protection of ancient woods mean in England, deforestation is highly likely, with some areas of woodland felled or destroyed and not replanted. Despite repeated requests; there is little government effort to accurately quantify the cumulative losses of woodland resulting from planning, infrastructure, tree disease and intensive land use."

The Trust says the number and variety of native trees being planted must increase if we are to have any hope of heading off serious environmental degradation and combat diseases which threaten millions of trees.

The latest Natural Capital Committee report, by the Government's own independent advisory body, found planting an extra 250,000 hectares near towns and cities could generate in excess of £500 million in benefits for society. A 2015 report for the Woodland Trust put the total value of UK woodlands at around £270 billion.

Poor planting figures are partly due to significant delays in FC grant agreements, and low uptake following a change to the system last year. The Trust says more flexible programmes are needed to grant aid both smaller and larger areas of woodland creation and attract a wider range of landowners willing to plant.

The Trust hopes the Government's forthcoming framework for its 25 year plan for nature will herald a fresh approach, and genuinely new and practical solutions to address these issues.

*UK Figures:*

- In Scotland, 4,600 hectares planted in 2015-16, 3000 hectares less than last year's 7,600 ha and again, far short of the 10,000ha target.
- In Wales just 100 hectares was planted – the same as last year. The Welsh Government set an aspiration of 100,000 hectares of new woodland by 2030.
- In Northern Ireland planting reached just 100 hectares in comparison to 200 hectares last year.

*Notes to editors:*

For more information contact [lizcarney@woodlandtrust.org.uk](mailto:lizcarney@woodlandtrust.org.uk) 03443 770 5441 or press office 01476 581121. Forestry is a devolved issue. For a Woodland Trust response to planting in Wales please contact [rorfrancis@woodlandtrust.org.uk](mailto:rorfrancis@woodlandtrust.org.uk) and for a Woodland Trust response to planting in Scotland please contact [georgeanderson@woodlandtrust.org.uk](mailto:georgeanderson@woodlandtrust.org.uk)

The Woodland Trust: is the largest woodland conservation charity in the UK. It has over 500,000 supporters.

The Trust has three key aims: i) protect ancient woodland which is rare, unique and irreplaceable, ii) restoration of damaged ancient woodland, bringing precious pieces of our natural history back to life, iii) plant native trees and woods with the aim of creating resilient landscapes for people and wildlife.

Established in 1972, the Woodland Trust now has over 1,000 sites in its care covering over 22,500 hectares. Access to its woods is free

The Woodland Trust is committed to spearheading a project to plant 64 million new native trees in woods, hedges and community schemes over the next decade – one for every person in the UK.

Late Grant agreements: (The FC acknowledges late issue of agreements, and initial poor Countryside Stewardship uptake, but states it anticipates "an amount of planting being undertaken in April 2016 which will be reflected within the next quarter's figures (April to June 2016)." But planting April – June is questionable, as in many parts of the country the planting season finishes in March.

New Planting and Funding: The Forestry Commission anticipated around half 2015/16 planting would be publicly funded through grant schemes, with half being funded by private investment. Trees and woods were mainly planted in the private sector.

The Government has committed to plant 11 million trees between 2015 and 2020. So it needs to plant over two million each year to reach its target.

UK Woodland cover: The UK is one of the least wooded nations in Europe at 13%. UK ranks 25 out of 28 for the percentage of land area that is forest cover. Average woodland cover in the EU is 38%.



## Woodland Trust

### Figures published today show tree planting in Wales is flat-lining

15 June 2016

By [Rory Francis](#)

Coed Cadw Woodland Trust is alarmed by continued low level of new woodland planting in Wales confirmed in official figures today. This is despite the growing evidence of the importance of trees and woods for wildlife, the economy and as a vital element of green spaces for health and well-being of communities.

But grants will be available for small scale woodland creation projects in Wales between 27 June and 29 July.

The [figures released](#) show just 100ha of new woodland was planted in Wales last year, the same as the year before. This is despite the Welsh Government's published aspiration to create 100,000ha of new woodland between now and 2030.

"There's an ever growing body of evidence of the importance of trees and woodland in creating resilient farms, in tackling air pollution, improving water quality and offering scope to deliver natural flood management. That's on top of what they can offer for wildlife and their productive potential of timber. Low planting rates mean that Wales is missing the opportunity to benefit in this way. We think the Welsh Government's ambition to create 100,000 ha of new woodland between now and 2030 would go a long way towards delivering the far-sighted commitment to sustainable land management that is now enshrined in the Environment (Wales) Act", says Jerry Langford, Wales Director for the Coed Cadw Woodland Trust.

Woodland cover in Wales stands at just 14%, making Wales one of the least wooded countries in Europe. The Woodland Trust believes that the poor planting figures are partly due to uncertainty and delays in introducing the new Glastir Woodland Creation grants, and the way in which the Government changed farm subsidy rules last year to penalise farmers retaining trees on their land.

"We support the Welsh Government in its genuine desire to see Wales benefit more from woodland and trees, but if this aspiration is to be delivered, there needs to be a consistent commitment from across Government", continues Jerry Langford.

#### *Some good news*

There is some good news, however. Lesley Griffiths, Wales' new Environment Minister announced on Monday that there will be an opportunity to apply for Small Grants towards measures which will help lock up carbon, such as support small woodland planting, tree planting and hedgerow creation and restoration, between 27 June and 29 July. The scheme will offer grants of up to £5,000 per customer and up to £1.5 million is available in total.

One farmer who has recognised the value of trees on his farm and who is aiming to plant more is Arwel Davies of Braich y Waun Farm in the Upper Cain catchment near Llanfyllin. He is one of 10 farmers in the valley who received funding through the Coed Cymru/Rivers Trusts Soil and Water Nature Fund Scheme, supported by the Welsh Government, and subsequently from the Woodland Trust, to restore hedges as shelter and for the management of surface water runoff.

He explains his desire to plant more trees by telling a family anecdote:

“On first buying the farm, my grandfather took his father out to stand alongside one of the system of banks and hedges and said: ‘We ought to appreciate all the sheer hard labour that went into creating these banks and hedges. They give our stock so much shelter.’ In a way they knew more about farming then, than we do today.”

If you are considering creating new woodland, hedges, shelterbelts copses etc. and would like advice and information on Welsh Government grants available for tree planting or direct support available through Coed Cadw’s own schemes for woodland or hedge creation, including its subsidised farm tree packs, then please contact its woodland creation team on 0330 333 5303 or [plant@woodlandtrust.org.uk](mailto:plant@woodlandtrust.org.uk).

### *UK figures*

In England, the figure was just 700 ha compared to 2,400 ha last year. In Scotland, 4,600 was planted, 40% less than last year’s 7,600ha and far short of the 10,000ha target. And in Northern Ireland planting reached just 100ha in comparison to 200ha last year.

## **Confederation of Forest Industries**

### **Forestry Sector criticises 'woeful' tree planting figures**

**11 May 2016**

New figures on woodland creation show that the Conservative Government will fail to deliver its manifesto commitment to plant 11 million trees between 2015 and 2020 unless it takes radical action now.

[Official statistics from Forestry Commission England](#) show that between April 2015 and March 2016, only 546 hectares of woodland were planted [less than 5.5 square km] - around 642,000 new trees, according to the figures released [see Page 11 of the document]. This is substantially short of the 2.2 million trees that have to be planted every year if the Government is going to meet its targets of 11 million new trees by 2020.

The Government has blamed late issuing of approvals to plant trees for these low figures. Confor understands IT-related problems and delays between the various government agencies involved in approving tree

planting were part of the cause of this situation which is causing significant difficulties for tree nurseries across the UK.

Harry Frew, Managing Director of Cheviot Trees near Berwick-upon-Tweed, said: "The planting figure for 2015/16 is woeful and is the lowest for more than five years. We need urgent Government action to address this or UK nurseries will go out of business - forcing us to import trees from overseas with all the associated plant health risks that brings."

Stuart Goodall, Chief Executive of Confor, said: "With Britain's forest and woodland cover barely one-third of our European Union neighbours and growing demand for timber products, it is absolutely clear that the UK needs to significantly increase the number of trees it plants every year.

"At last year's General Election, the Conservatives committed to planting 11 million trees in the five years to 2020 in England. This was the largest commitment given by any of the main political parties and was welcomed by the forestry and wood processing sector. In terms of size, 11 million trees represents a new forest the size of the City of Preston."

Since then, the devastating storms last winter and subsequent flooding have shown an even greater need to plant more trees as a means of natural flood management. Conservative MP for Berwick-upon-Tweed Anne-Marie Trevelyan called on DEFRA to increase its commitment to 200 million trees and Confor supports that ambition.

Mr Goodall added: "Put simply, unless the Government and Forestry Commission England take action now to reverse the poor uptake of the Countryside Stewardship scheme for woodland creation, there's no chance of Government meeting its target of planting 11 million trees.

"Confor stands ready to help the Government in any way it can. The forestry industry makes a significant contribution to the rural economy in England and woodland planting will create jobs and long-term growth opportunities for forestry and wood manufacturing companies – helping to rebalance the national economy and reducing reliance on imports."

Mr Goodall said that a new grant to help with the cost of preparing applications for tree planting demonstrated that there was widespread desire to plant more trees, but the process of approving those schemes had to be fundamentally improved. Confor also hopes the National Flood Resilience Review chaired by Oliver Letwin MP will recommend much greater planting of trees as a means of reducing flood risks.

## 4. Parliamentary Questions

### [Farmers and Environmental Groups \(Funding\)](#)

**Asked by: Lucy Frazer**

Many farmers in my constituency have been signed up to agri-environmental schemes for many years. What contribution does the Secretary of State think that the schemes, and our farmers, are making to improve our environment?

**Answering member: Andrea Leadsom | Department: Environment, Food and Rural Affairs**

I join my hon. Friend in applauding the efforts of farmers across the country. In the past five years, our agri-environment schemes have delivered excellent long-term benefits, including 150,000 acres of habitats, the planting of more than 11 million trees and the restoration or planting of 950 miles of hedges. All of this supports our long-term pledge to be the first generation to leave the environment in a better place than we found it.

**HC Deb 24 November 2016 | Vol 617 c1012**

### [Air Pollution: Urban Areas](#)

**Asked by: Lord Hunt of Chesterton**

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether their policies for reducing air pollution in cities include expanding the areas of planting of trees and other vegetation on the ground and on buildings by public and private organisations.

**Answering member: Lord Gardiner of Kimble | Department: Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs**

The Air Quality Expert Group, a group of independent air quality experts responsible for advising the Government, is currently working on a report considering air quality impacts of tree planting.

The Government is currently considering the extent to which trees might be used as part of the wider mix of actions to improve air quality and this will be informed by the above report.

**HL Deb 15 November 2016 | PQ HL2893**

### [Tree Planting](#)

**Asked by: Shannon, Jim**

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what recent steps she has taken to promote the planting of trees.

**Answering member: Dr Thérèse Coffey | Department: Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs**

Forestry is a devolved matter and the answer refers to England only.

New woodland planting in England is supported by the Rural Development Programme Countryside Stewardship woodland creation grant scheme. The Woodland Creation Planning Grant has also just opened for a second phase of applications. The first phase generated plans for over 1,064 hectares of woodland.

**HC Deb 28 October 2016 | PQ 50056**

*Tree Planting*

**Asked by: Argar, Edward**

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what the tree-planting rates have been in England in each year since 2006.

**Answering member: Dr Thérèse Coffey | Department: Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs**

The Forestry Commission collect and publish National Statistics for England on the area, in hectares, of new woodland planting. It also estimates the number of trees planted, based on the average number of trees planted per hectare in the grant supported planting. In 2015-16 this average was 1,566 trees per hectare.

Table 1 below provides annual planting area published by the Forestry Commission since 2006 and its estimate of the number of trees planted.

In 2015-16 the Rural Development Programme for England (RDPE) supported 546 hectares of planting and it is estimated that 165 hectares of woodland was created, without RDPE support, bringing the total created during 2015-16 to 711 hectares.

In the period April 2016 to June 2016, a further 422 hectares of woodland was recorded as being planted with RDPE support.

The RDPE figures reflect the slow initial take up of Countryside Stewardship support for woodland planting. Planting is recorded at the time the grant is paid, which means that some planting will have taken place in the previous financial year to that in which it is recorded. Approximately 1,292,000 trees were planted in England with RDPE support since April 2015.

**Table 1: New planting of woodland in England since 2005-06**

<b>Financial Year to 31<sup>st</sup> March</b>	<b>a) New planting by land area</b>	<b>b) Estimated number of trees</b>
	<b>Thousand hectares</b>	<b>Million trees</b>
2005-06	3.7	4.1
2006-07	3.2	3.5
2007-08	2.6	2.9
2008-09	2.5	2.8
2009-10	2.3	2.5
2010-11	2.5	2.8
2011-12	2.7	3.0
2012-13	2.6	2.9
2013-14	3.3	3.6
2014-15	2.4	2.6
2015-16	0.7	0.8

Source: Forestry Statistics 2016 (Forestry Commission)

**HC Deb 26 October 2016 | PQ 49154**

*Tree Planting*

**Asked by: Argar, Edward**

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what estimate she has made of the likely rate of tree-planting in England in (a) 2016 and (b) 2017.

**Answering member: Dr Thérèse Coffey | Department: Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs**

The Forestry Commission has reported, as an Official Statistic, that 522 hectares of woodland, equivalent to 798,000 trees, was planted through Government-funded incentives to the end of June 2016. All agreements for schemes with planting planned for 2017 are currently being processed and have yet to be signed, meaning that no forecast of tree numbers can yet be provided. However, the Forestry Commission estimates that the likely rate of new woodland planting will increase in the remainder of 2016 and 2017.

**HC Deb 24 October 2016 | PQ 49155**

[Topical Questions](#)**Asked by: Jeremy Lefroy**

My constituents and those of my hon. Friend the Member for Cannock Chase (Amanda Milling) and my right hon. Friend the Member for South Staffordshire (Gavin Williamson) enjoy the wonderful Cannock Chase, so we were delighted by the Conservative manifesto commitment to plant trees. May we have an update on how many have been planted?

**Answered by: Dr Coffey | Department: Environment, Food and Rural Affairs**

I am pleased to report that woodland cover in England is at its highest since the 14th century—well before I was born—and we are committed to growing it even further by planting another 11 million trees over the course of this Parliament. The second phase of applications for the woodland creation planning grant has opened; the first phase generated plans for over 1,000 hectares of woodland. I ask hon. Members to continue to encourage schools to plant trees and to endorse our excellent scheme with the Woodland Trust, which I draw to the attention of the House.

**HC Deb 13 October 2016 | Vol 615 c439***Tree Planting***Asked by: Shannon, Jim**

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps her Department is taking to encourage tree planting; and what grants are available for that purpose.

**Answering member: Dr Thérèse Coffey | Department: Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs**

The Government is committed to planting 11 million trees in England during this Parliament, and is also supporting the planting of a million trees by schoolchildren, in partnership with the Woodland Trust. Individual administrations within the UK determine their own ambitions for tree planting.

In England, we encourage tree planting by championing sector-led initiatives, such as Grown in Britain and the Roots to Prosperity strategy, in their work to grow demand for wood from ground level up, developing the woodland economy. We also support the Woodland Carbon Code to help to attract private investment in woodland creation.

Grants are available from the Forestry Commission under the EU funded Woodland Creation Grant in the Rural Development Programme for England. Until negotiations conclude and the UK leaves the EU, all existing arrangements remain in place, including the rural development programme. We are working with the Treasury to ensure continuity, particularly for agri-environment schemes, but without prejudice to future decisions.

**HC Deb 25 July 2016 | PQ 43052**

Tree Planting

**Asked by: Lord Blencathra**

To ask Her Majesty's Government what information they have gathered on the contribution that the 64 million new trees to be planted by the Woodland Trust in England would make to carbon reduction or capture.

**Answering member: Lord Gardiner of Kimble | Department: Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs**

The Government has not gathered any information about the contribution these trees would make towards carbon reduction or capture. However, the Forestry Commission's Woodland Carbon Code Carbon Lookup Tables, suggest that 64 million trees planted as woodland could capture 20 million tonnes of carbon dioxide over the first 50 years of their life.

**HL Deb 12 May 2016 | PQ HL8223**

Woodland Trust

**Asked by: Lord Blencathra**

To ask Her Majesty's Government what is the current level of financial support they provide to the Woodland Trust and its tree planting programme, and whether they have any plans to increase that support over the next four years.

**Answering member: Lord Gardiner of Kimble | Department: Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs**

In the last financial year, the Government provided £55,338.12 to the Woodland Trust, to plant 35,400 trees with state primary schools across England in spring 2016. This support will increase over the next four years, as we expand the programme to fund the Woodland Trust to provide an additional 400,000 trees for schools for schoolchildren to plant in school grounds and local communities.

The Woodland Trust can apply for grants under the Countryside Stewardship scheme, as part of the Rural Development Programme, in the same way as any other land owner or manager and it receives grants from previous support mechanisms.

**HL Deb 11 May 2016 | PQ HL8222**

Tree Planting: Urban Areas

**Asked by: Chalk, Alex**

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps her Department is taking to support tree planting in towns.

**Answering member: Rory Stewart | Department: Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs**



The Government recognises the social and environmental benefits of urban trees. We will champion the Vision for a Resilient Urban Forest, developed by the Urban Forestry and Woodlands Advisory Committee Network. This Vision sets the direction and challenges local decision makers and communities to consider how they can better value, manage and expand the urban forest in their areas.

Millions of schoolchildren across England, mostly in urban areas, will have the chance to plant trees in their communities as part of a Government-backed scheme to give free trees to schools in partnership with the Woodland Trust.

**HC Deb 11 May 2016 | PQ 36666**

[Agriculture: Forestry](#)

**Asked by: Baroness Miller of Chilthorne Domer**

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of whether agroforestry measures under the CAP could help provide an incentive for farmers to plant some trees on pasture as opposed to clearing scrub and trees from pasture, and what assessment they have made of whether CAP Pillar 1 Ecological Focus Areas or Pillar 2 Article 23 measures would be more appropriate for English needs.

**Answering member: Lord Gardiner of Kimble | Department: Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs**

The Countryside Stewardship scheme provides options for farmers to manage both grassland and scrub in environmentally beneficial ways. Countryside Stewardship also provides opportunities to plant trees. These options can be used to deliver environmental enhancements and could contribute to agroforestry without needing to apply the Article 23 measure.

CAP Pillar 1 Ecological Focus Areas can only include agroforestry where this is supported under Pillar 2 Article 23 measures (agroforestry). We have not implemented the agroforestry measure in England.

**HL Deb 30 March 2016 | PQ HL7072**

[Agriculture: Forestry](#)

**Asked by: Baroness Miller of Chilthorne Domer**

To ask Her Majesty's Government why the only current option for English farmers who wish to plant trees with CAP support is to have forestry as a separate enterprise on their holding, with densities of around 400 trees per hectare, rather than integrate the trees into their arable or livestock areas in a less dense planting.

**Answering member: Lord Gardiner of Kimble | Department: Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs**

English farmers can plant trees with Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) support either to create woodland habitat under the forestry measure of

the Rural Development Regulation or to deliver a range of benefits such as landscape or the provision of nesting and habitat for farm wildlife under its agri-environment measure. Both these measures are available to farmers and other land managers as part of the Countryside Stewardship scheme. Tree-planting options do not require a minimum density (or number) of trees to be planted except when used to create new woodland.

**HL Deb 30 March 2016 | PQ HL7069**

## 5. Useful links and further reading

House of Commons Environment, Food and Rural Affairs Select Committee inquiry: *Forestry in England*

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/committees/committees-a-z/commons-select/environment-food-and-rural-affairs-committee/inquiries/parliament-2015/forestry-inquiry-16-17/>

Government Forestry Policy Statement January 2013

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/government-forestry-policy-statement>

Forestry Commission England *Corporate Plan 2015-16*

[http://www.forestry.gov.uk/pdf/FCECorporatePlan20156WebFinal.pdf/\\$FILE/FCECorporatePlan20156WebFinal.pdf](http://www.forestry.gov.uk/pdf/FCECorporatePlan20156WebFinal.pdf/$FILE/FCECorporatePlan20156WebFinal.pdf)

Scottish Forestry Strategy and Implementation Plan

<http://scotland.forestry.gov.uk/supporting/strategy-policy-guidance/forestry-strategy>

Natural Resources Wales Forest Policy

<https://naturalresources.wales/forestry/forest-strategy-policy-and-guidance/forest-policy/?lang=en>

Woodland Trust: Northern Ireland

<https://www.woodlandtrust.org.uk/about-us/where-we-work/northern-ireland/>

Forestry: Northern Ireland Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs website

<https://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/topics/forestry>

Welsh Government: Plant!

*Plant! is a project to celebrate the birth or adoption of every child in Wales by planting a tree.*

<http://gov.wales/topics/environmentcountryside/forestry/plantatree/?lang=en>

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