



Woodlands' View

SCOTTISH WOODLANDS NEWSLETTER | Summer 2023



..... New
..... Managing Director

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Growing a Sustainable Future

SCOTTISH WOODLANDS LTD IN GREAT SHAPE FOR CONTINUED GROWTH IN 2023



Ian Robinson, Managing Director

Scottish Woodlands Ltd is in great shape for 2023 after appointing a new Managing Director, bringing three new Directors onto an extended Board, and posting a strong set of annual results.

Ian Robinson has taken over as Managing Director of the firm, which has 240 staff working in 19 offices in Scotland, northern England, Wales and Northern Ireland.

Dessy Henry takes on Mr Robinson's previous role of Forestry Director, while three new Directors join the Board - Charles Bushby, Neil Crookston and Michael Hall.

Mr Robinson, who has worked with Scottish Woodlands Ltd for 35 years, wished his predecessor Ralland Browne well, after he retired from the business in March.

He said: *"It is a real honour to take the reins at Scottish Woodlands Ltd at such an important time in the development of our business and indeed the forestry and wood industry. We have an extraordinarily talented team of staff working across the UK, helping clients manage their woodlands and forestry projects to achieve significant outcomes for new woodland planting, timber harvesting and the delivery of infrastructure projects."* *"There has never been a more interesting or crucial time to be in this industry to help meet Net Zero and biodiversity commitments. With timber playing such an important role in storing carbon in the built environment and substituting more carbon-intensive building materials like concrete and steel, it is vital we continue to play our part in growing the UK forestry resource."*

The three new Directors joined the board from 1st April 2023. Neil Crookston is Director (North Region), Charles Bushby is Director (Central Region) and Michael Hall is Director for South East Scotland, England and Wales.

Mr Robinson said: *"We're delighted to welcome them to the Scottish Woodlands board. Their commitment and diligence in their existing roles made them clear choices to help us move the business forward now and into the future to continue the growth of our market share."*

Scottish Woodlands Ltd's latest results, posted at the end of May, showed operating profits increasing from £4.76 million to £4.95 million to the year ending 30 September 2022. Mr Robinson said this was down to the company's prominent role in all parts of a "vibrant" forestry and wood industry.

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As we return to a post-Covid normality, in 2023 we are attending a full schedule of shows including the Balmoral Show (Northern Ireland), Royal Highland Show, Scottish Game Fair, Royal Welsh Show and Black Isle Show.

Whilst the uncertainties of the last few years have certainly not disappeared, there is certainly optimism in the forestry industry. Despite the ongoing conflict in Ukraine and the aftermath of Storm Arwen the timber market is improving and government support for new woodland creation remains strong. Our long-standing relationship with timber processors is helping our clients address these marketing challenges.

We have reinforced our senior management team, by appointing three new Directors, Charles Bushby, Michael Hall and Neil Crookston, and intend to carry out further restructuring to allow us to better serve our clients and meet the ever-increasing workload.

Our graduate development programme continues to flourish and has become an essential part of Scottish Woodlands' approach to growing a sustainable future. During 2023 we will recruit five new graduates.

As the world continues to replace fossil fuels with more sustainable energy sources and to mitigate the effects of a changing climate, the forest industry is increasingly seen as an important part of the solution, fixing carbon in our growing trees and producing low-carbon, sustainable raw materials for a growing population. We look forward to working with you to help develop these solutions.

If you're thinking of planting trees on your land, with all the benefits for your business, the wider economy and environment this can deliver, please contact one of our offices. Have a great summer!



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RURAL SHOW SEASON KICKS OFF AT THE BALMORAL

The rural show season has kicked off for Scottish Woodlands Ltd with a visit to Northern Ireland's biggest agricultural event.



Brian Malcolmson, Senior Forest Manager in Northern Ireland, Emma Menmuir, Lynne MacDonald and Liam Stuart represented SWL at the four-day Balmoral Show, held at the Eikon Exhibition Centre in Balmoral Park, Lisburn.

"We were at the show for four full days and there was a great buzz," said Mr Malcolmson. "We were very busy talking to farmers who are thinking about planting trees on their land."

"We were able to talk to them about the different schemes available and explain the value of diversifying their farm business by tree planting."

Earlier this year, SWL partnered with local schools and a Northern Ireland business to plant 44,000 trees (read more on page 8).

The focus now turns to the Royal Highland Show at Ingliston, the biggest event in the Scottish agricultural calendar, which takes place from June 22-25.

Scottish Woodlands Ltd has a large presence at the show and supplies the tree trunks for the ever-popular pole climbing competition.

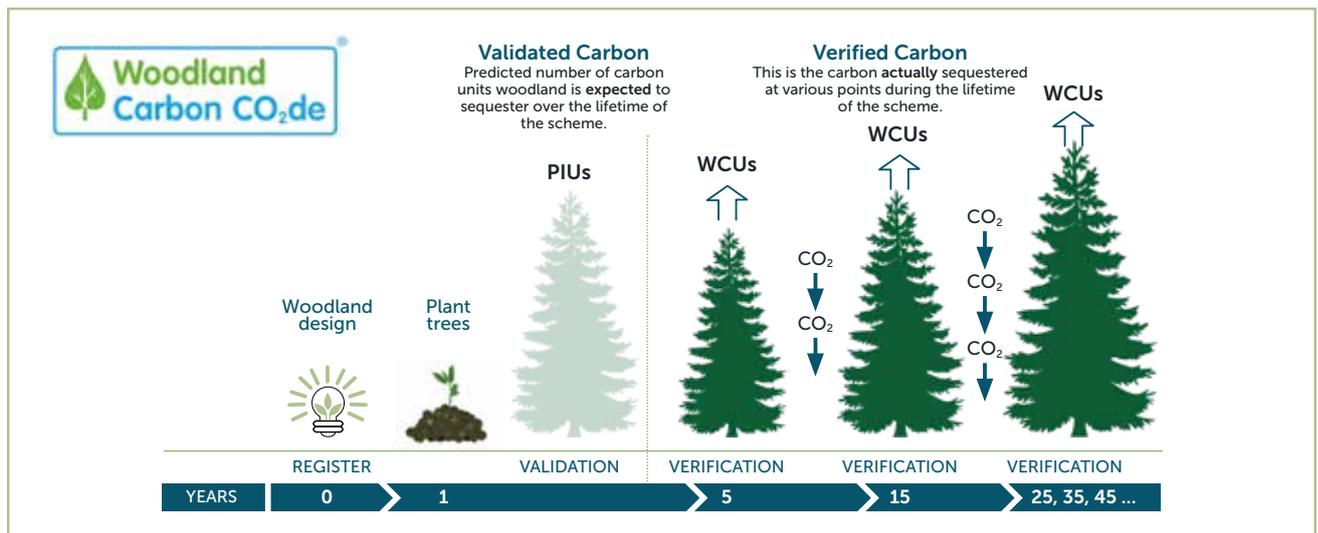




Scottish Woodlands Photography Competition - RUNNER UP - Jaeger Lamont

WOODLAND CARBON CODE

On 1st October 2022, the Woodland Carbon Code (WCC) launched version 2.2. The WCC is a UK Government backed code, whereby landowners can register, validate and verify eligible afforestation projects on the UK Land Carbon Registry to quantify the number of carbon units (tonnes of CO₂ equivalent) new woodlands will sequester over a specified length of time.



Version 2.2 introduced new rules in the form of a standardised investment test to assess whether the project is additional i.e., would not have been planted in the absence of carbon finance which must be proved for projects to generate carbon units under the code. The new test is simpler to prepare and easier to validate, however, the high level of standardisation often creates artificially distorted results which can lead to projects that are genuinely additional not passing the test and thus ineligible for carbon units.

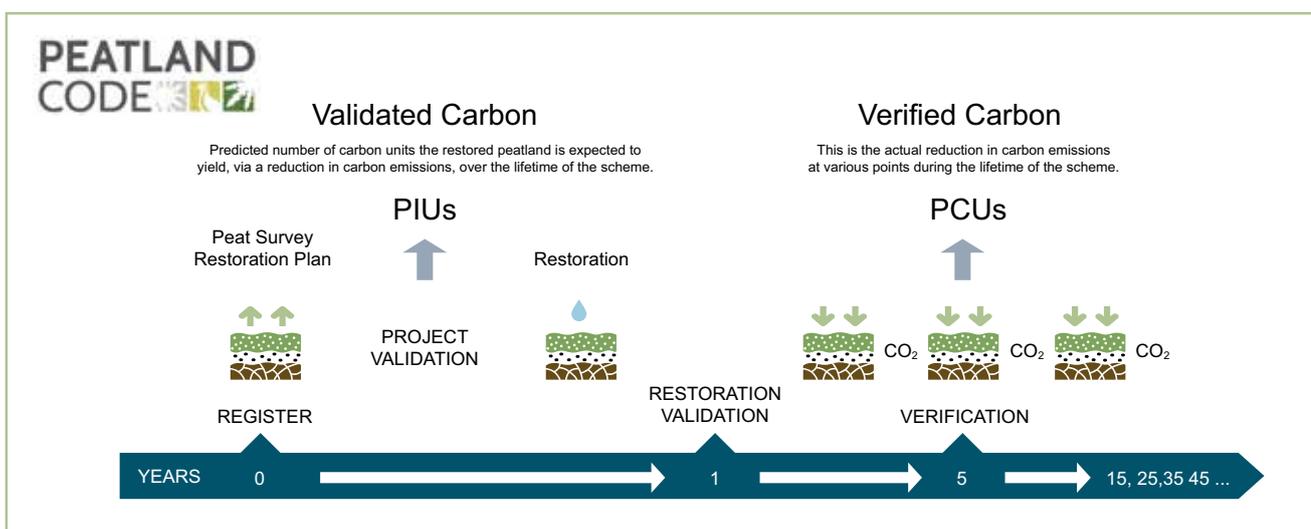
The new rules are being applied to new woodland creation projects and woodland designs scrutinised against the WCC's eligibility criteria. The unfortunate consequence is that projects which comprise >40% Sitka Spruce of the net planted area, planted on Less Favoured Areas, exactly the ground and species we should be planting to grow future UK timber and carbon resource, will struggle to qualify for carbon credits under the new rules. However, Version 2.2 favours minimum intervention broadleaf schemes

and does encourage species diversity in woodlands including diverse conifer models. Each project is judged on its own merits, yet the new rules are revealing a trend towards either woodlands for carbon or timber production. It is evident that the change in rules are heavily impacting clients' objectives towards planting, with some clients choosing not to plant because they are unable to get a project which meets their overall objectives. This is an unfortunate consequence and somewhat contrary to the UK Government's targets and UK Committee on Climate Change's recommendations of planting 30,000 trees per annum by 2025.

Scottish Woodland's Carbon Team are the largest project developer for the WCC in the UK and Carbon Manager, Emma Kerr, has recently been elected to the WCC's Advisory Board under the project developer post. The team continues to monitor the outcome of the new rules and are well placed to provide advice at pre-investment and woodland design stage.



PEATLAND CODE



Peatland Code (PC) version 2.0 was released in March 2023. The PC is a voluntary standard for UK peatland projects wishing to market the climate benefit of restoration, administered by IUCN Peatland Programme. Similarly, to the WCC, landowners can register, validate and verify eligible restoration projects on the UK Land Carbon Registry to quantify the reduction in carbon emissions (tonnes of CO₂ equivalent) from restoring degraded peatlands over a specified length of time.

Prior to version 2.0 projects were only eligible on blanket or raised bog with greater than 50cm peat depth where degraded peat was classed as actively eroding or drained. Version 2.0 has introduced fens as an eligible peatland habitat, reduced the minimum peat depth to 30cm for bogs and 45cm for fens along with introducing further degradation condition categories such as modified bog.

Furthermore, the new version includes updates to the field survey protocol and emissions factors to ensure the reduction in carbon emissions from restoring peatlands from varying degraded states is in line with UK GHG inventory.

Scottish Woodlands have an increasing portfolio of peatland projects with 2 active peatland restoration projects, one in the Cairngorms National Park which is going through validation and the other in the Moorfoot Hills, Scottish Borders, which is successfully validated. Both projects comprise peat hagg reprofiling and drain blocking via peat dams to revegetate the peatland and increase the water table of the bogs. The Carbon Team along with Forest Managers would be delighted to discuss any potential projects, and provide an assessment of sites for restoration.



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SCOTTISH WOODLANDS HELPS SAVE 260 TOADS FROM BUSY ROAD

A toad rescue patrol has helped more than 250 of the creatures safely cross a busy A-road during their breeding season - with a little help from Scottish Woodlands Ltd.

The night patrol, near Lundie in Angus, has been using the car park at a nearby forest managed by Scottish Woodlands as their base to help the toads cross the busy A923 north-west of Dundee. The owners of Lundie Farm supported the request and originally provided the car park with the aim of making it easier for people to walk in their woods.

A total of 260 toads (and some frogs) have been saved by Froglife volunteers at Smithton Hill, making use of the Scottish Woodlands site car park as crucial access to carry out their work during March and April this year - the toads' breeding season.

The success of the toad patrol means volunteers are now in the process of designing 'toad ladders' to install into drains and gutters on site, so that toads can climb out in future.



Local toad patrol volunteers on site



Toads that have successfully crossed to safety ready for the breeding season

Toad patrol organiser Celia Holmes said: *"Toads migrate back to their ancestral breeding ponds each year. They follow the same route, regardless of what gets in their way, which sometimes leads to them crossing roads."*

"We get a toad vs. traffic scenario - and the toads inevitably come off worse."

She explained that toads are most active on warm, damp nights - so that's when the volunteers prioritise their patrols at Smithton Wood to ensure their safe passage across the road.

"We are really grateful for the support from Scottish Woodlands at this important breeding site for toads and other amphibians in Angus," she added.

Neil White, Scottish Woodlands Ltd Branch Manager at Perth (Forestry) said: *"Scottish Woodlands is managing forests right across the UK and we make every effort to be a good neighbour and to help out local wildlife whenever possible."*

"It's great to see local volunteers come together and spend their time making sure Scotland's toad have safe passage to their breeding grounds during the spring months. It shows Scotland's forests don't just produce top-quality timber but can be havens for wildlife of all shapes and sizes as well."

**For more information on toad patrols, visit:
Toads on Roads (froglife.org)**



SCOTTISH WOODLANDS RAISES £2,930 FOR CHOSEN CHARITY

Scottish Woodlands Ltd is delighted to announce that its dinner dance raised an impressive £2,930 for charity partner of the year, Lyme Disease UK.

The event, at the Crieff Hydro Hotel, was attended by more than 240 staff members and their guests from our offices across the UK, who all had a great time!

The evening kicked off with a warm welcome speech from Managing Director, Ian Robinson, and the programme for the night featured Lyme Disease UK's logo.

The funds - raised through the generous support of a raffle at the event - will go towards supporting the

vital work of the charity in raising awareness of Lyme disease and providing patients with much-needed support.

As a company that values the well-being of its employees, Scottish Woodlands Ltd is proud to have taken proactive measures to protect them from tick bites (which can cause Lyme Disease), especially those working in forestry management roles.

Staff members have been provided with Lyme Disease UK's information leaflets, while Scottish Woodlands Ltd has even developed its own 'Tick Recorder App', which identifies high-risk times, seasons, and locations for tick bites.



To donate to the charity or sponsor our staff on any of their events, please visit our online fundraising page:
<https://lymediseaseuk.enthuse.com/pf/scottish-woodlands--ltd-78955>



44,000 TREES PLANTED IN NORTHERN IRELAND

Scottish Woodlands Ltd has partnered with a business in Northern Ireland to plant more than 44,000 trees.



The joint initiative, with paving and walling company Tobermore, promises to have a positive environmental impact while supporting local biodiversity, recreation and employment.

Local school children took part in the launch of the project, at a site on the outskirts of Ballymoney, a town almost 50 miles north-west of Belfast.

The green field site will be transformed into a forest of native tree species including oak, crab apple and wild cherry.

The scheme has been funded by the Department of Agriculture, Environment & Rural Affairs (DAERA) through the Forest Expansion Scheme - and will be managed and maintained by Scottish Woodlands Ltd for the next five years.

Brian Malcomson, Senior Forest Manager at Scottish Woodlands Ltd, said: *"This woodland achieves several objectives all at once. The primary one is by contributing to offset carbon emissions generated by Tobermore, but it will also enhance biodiversity in the local area, and enhance the landscape of the area. In addition, it will create a space for recreation and education - and provide local employment."*

Earlier this month, Tobermore was shortlisted as a finalist for the Sustainable Manufacturing Business of the Year award at the Business Eye Sustainability Awards.

David Henderson, Managing Director and owner of Tobermore, said: *"Tobermore is delighted to be involved in this environmental project. Our partnership with Scottish Woodlands Ltd coincides with our extensive decarbonisation programme. We are extremely passionate about protecting our environment and therefore sustainability is a key strategic focus for Tobermore."*



Eco-conscious pupils from Our Lady of Lourdes School, Carrowreagh Primary School, and Garryduff Primary School came along to join in with the tree planting and to hear about the project and its aims.

WALKING AND TALKING PEATLAND AND WOODLAND

Scottish Woodlands Ltd led a successful 'walk and talk' event to share good practice of woodland creation and peatland restoration.

Around 20 people attended the event at Tulchan of Glenisla in Angus - part of a series organised by Scottish Land & Estates.

The group looked first at a large peatland restoration scheme on the site, where Richard Fraser of contractor and lead operator Taiga Upland talked about the restoration techniques on show and explained the adaptive approach taken to more challenging parts of the site.



Discussions ranged around the science behind the peatland restoration and how peat depth survey techniques could be improved and made more accurate. Carbon capture was also discussed.

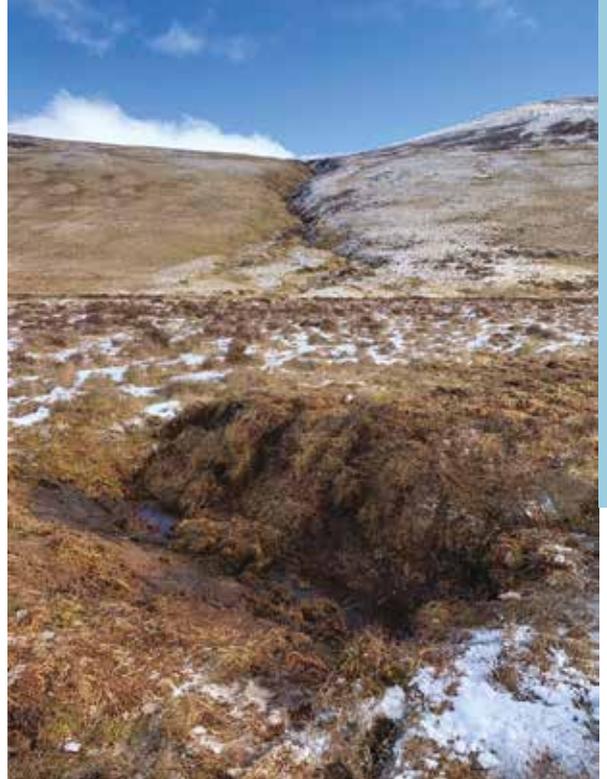
The group then went to a viewpoint further up Glenisla to look at the project which will see 100 hectares (almost 250 acres) of native woodland created.

The application process and potential conflicts with deer and the landscape implications of designing new woodland in the Cairngorms National Park was discussed, as well as the interaction with wild land and the principles of forest design.

On one of the coldest days of the year so far, the outdoor elements were bookended with a warm breakfast and soup lunch in the estate lodge!

Neil White, Scottish Woodlands Ltd Branch Manager (Forestry) in Perth, who led the visit, said: *"We had a great day at Tulchan of Glenisla and some really interesting discussions on peatland restoration, carbon capture, woodland creation and how to integrate this with the activities of a commercial sporting estate. It was good to see the peatland restoration machinery working and be able to talk about the techniques we've been using and trialling at Tulchan. There was plenty of time for networking and it was useful to hear the input and stories from other people and different viewpoints."*

Scottish Woodlands Ltd Carbon Manager Emma Kerr also attended the event and was able to stimulate discussion and answer questions about the carbon aspects of both the peatland restoration and woodland creation.



TIMBER MARKET UPDATE

'I cut down trees, I eat my lunch, I go to the lavatory. On Wednesdays I go shopping and have buttered scones for tea.'

Life in the timber sector industry is a simple affair, according to Monty Python's Flying Circus and the Lumberjack song. It would be fair to say that I have caught myself reminiscing of simpler times within the industry, prior to the global lumberjack fraternity was hit by pandemic, war, and ensuing economic turmoil! The irony is not lost on me either when I look back to the 'good old days' in 2020-21 when the timber industry couldn't keep pace with the insatiable demand for timber as the UK population raced for space in their homes and gardens, all thanks to the pandemic. A pandemic which no-one would ever want to repeat!

Scottish Woodlands Photography Competition - RUNNER UP - Isla Campbell

In 2022 challenges dominated the UK timber market, with record levels of demand and pricing on sawn softwood running through late 2021 into early 2022, until the downturn hit. Good availability of imported sawn softwood stocks held at ports, coupled with aggressive price discounting increased pressure on domestic carcassing. Overall softwood imports fell back in 2022 by 20% to 9.3 million m³, due to lower UK demand, although availability remained high (import and domestic) with merchants and distributors keeping order periods short due to seeing market distress and falling sawn prices.

The availability of lower-priced, higher quality C24 grade construction timber at port negatively impacted sales of domestic C16 throughout 2022, resulting in price erosion on C16. Most sawmills used a combination of curtailing production, while switching production to other markets (pallet and fencing). Curtailment ranged from 20-50% across the mills, with extended shutdowns during the festive period. The hope was through all these measures employed that sawn stocks would be adequately reduced to allow normal

production levels to resume in early 2023. To a large extent, this has proved to be the case albeit concerns remain throughout the timber processing sector as new house building activity, repair and maintenance projects continue to be curtailed with the consistent headwinds on the UK economy continue to suppress consumer confidence.

Private housing repair, maintenance and improvement (RMI) has unsurprisingly been in decline as the 'race for space' peaked in activity in Mar 22', since then there has been a general decline. Declining consumer confidence, the 'returning to office' factor, and increases in construction costs is pushing back or cancelling discretionary spend projects. Construction output is forecast to contract by 6.4% in 2023 according to the Construction Products Association (CPA) Spring forecast. This is downgrade from Winter 22, when a 4.7% contraction was expected. Private housing is the sector forecast to experience the sharpest reduction in output of 17% in 2023, compared to 2022. RMI is expected to fall by 9% in 2023.



The forecast by CPA assumes a pickup beginning this spring, helped by mortgage rates stabilising at current levels. However, this will need to be sustained throughout the summer months and beyond to bring confidence to the construction sector, allowing them to start new developments and push for construction output recovery in 2024.

Although fencing and pallet demand remained buoyant, until the final quarter in 2022, the increasing influence of the deteriorating UK economy came to bear. Lower economic activity resulted in a decline in distribution of goods, many of which are transported on pallets.

Discretionary spending in the fencing / gardening marketed was also impacted as consumer reigned in spending in light of inflationary pressures and the overall economic outlook.

The 'chink of light' in the UK market in 2022 which continues to date through 2023 has been the increase in demand for industrial small roundwood (IRW). Resulting in increased prices which, to a very modest extent, off-set the softening in the sawlog market. A reduction in the availability of co-products coming from the sawmills further compounded the demand for virgin roundwood. Demand from Europe for IRW has also been a welcomed outlet in the UK (principally NE Scotland, courtesy of Storm Arwen), which has increased in 2022 due to record high prices in Europe, exasperated by co-product shortages, again linked to sawmill output in Europe.

It would be a fair assessment to say that we are seeing some much-needed optimism in the sawlog market at the moment, albeit heavily caveated. Inventory levels have been reduced at the majority of the mills and there is an uptick in orders, with further increases expected in

the Spring and early Summer. We are seeing the private sector forest owners respond positively with a stepped increase in open market sales being put to market. A marked contrast from the second half of 2022.

Although there have been further reductions in sawn price in domestic C16 in early 2023 it is widely accepted that pricing has levelled out. This should benefit sawmills who can, with a degree of confidence, start to run production at more normal levels and in some cases are running ahead of planned budget. Whether overall sawn prices start to improve remains to be a very fragile prediction even now, again courtesy of the overall economic outlook.

The pallet market remains challenging but to a certain extent this is being offset by the continued demand for industrial small roundwood from the panel board, pulp and biomass sector.

The fencing market continues to improve with the usual seasonal uptick, however a reduction in construction output and home projects may ultimately lead to a subdued market in 2023.

Small roundwood demand remains very strong, with positive news continuing to come from the panel board, packaging, and biomass sector. Whether scheduled plant shutdowns in 2023, coupled with an increase in sawmilling activity ultimately results in small roundwood demand reducing remains to be seen for the balance of the year.

Overall, I would say an improving picture is emerging within the sector but as with most things in life and business nothing is guaranteed but for now, I'll hang my 2023 hat on *'I'm a lumberjack and I'm OK, I sleep all night, I work all day...'*



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FORESTRY INVESTMENT – WHERE NEXT?

The recent Savills Spotlight document on the Forestry Market (April 23)¹ outlined a value increase of 19% per gross hectare in 2022 compared with 2021 in the established forestry plantation market. This shows another year of significant growth year-on-year and adds to the long run of property value increases experienced for over 2 decades.

Forestry in these larger scale properties (the data looks at parcels >50 hectares only) continues to outperform most investment assets classes in terms of annual returns and remains extremely attractive as a standalone investment or as part of a larger property diversification strategy.

These increasing values are underpinned by increasing confidence in the value of timber, despite a current timber value dip due to reduced demand in the cost of living crisis, and the place that timber and biomass will play in the future.

In the UK we are forecast to have a decreasing availability of timber from the late 2030's due to the impact of reducing forestry planting from the early 1990's until recent years. The unintended consequence of a change in fiscal policy 35 years ago is to deprive us of the timber we will need to help decarbonise our economy in the global climate crisis.

Timber has an important role to play in locking carbon in the built environment when we use it in construction and in substituting for materials that have a significantly higher carbon footprint, such

as concrete and steel. Recognising that, the UK government has targeted to have 40% of new builds per annum constructed with timber frame by 2050. The current figure is 18%² per annum across the UK, with England (which accounts for some 84% of all new UK housing every year) sitting at 9%. There is a significant change in attitude from house builders, specifiers, and buyers required to achieve this. It is therefore interesting to read in a recent article in The Times that Barratt, Taylor Wimpey and Persimmon the UK's three largest builders are doing just that and investing in timber frame and offsite construction facilities in England.

But where will the timber come from? We currently import over 80% of all the timber we use in the UK and we desperately need to redress some of that balance and reduce our reliance on imported material. This is not only because of our trade deficits (£8.2bn in 2022) but also our overseas environmental/social impacts. The UK is highly regulated, the sources of much of the timber we import is not, and with the EU reporting that between 15% and 30% of all timber traded globally is illegally logged we need to be cognisant of our impacts elsewhere on the planet.

With the World Bank estimating that timber demand globally is set to quadruple by 2050 we must look after our own requirements as much as we can, whilst recognising we will never be self-sufficient. We need timber security now the same way we did when the Forestry Commission was set up in 1919.

1. Savills – Spotlight on Forestry April 2023
2. <https://www.nhbc.co.uk>



In the UK, we have roughly 16.8 million hectares of land in agriculture, with almost 11 million hectares (65%) of this being permanent grassland³.

The Committee on Climate Change's report – Net Zero The UK's contribution to stopping global warming – May 2019⁴ outlined a "Further Ambition target of 30,000 hectares of new forestry planting per annum between 2020 and 2050". This equates to some 900,000 hectares of new woodland, or roughly 8% of the UK's grazing land.

Targeting this to less productive areas of farmland is more likely to increase on-farm efficiencies, and it would be reasonable to consider that this conversion of land to assist with the UK Government's Net Zero ambitions could be achieved with no negative impact on food production, in fact the benefits of on-farm woodland⁵ should provide a positive benefit to livestock through provision of shelter whilst adding capital value to less productive areas of farm units. And the woodland can generate carbon units the farmer can use to inset against their own UK based business emissions.

We are currently caught up in an agriculture **or** trees debate, but we need to be considering an agriculture **and** trees future by taking off the blinkers and looking at the wider picture.

Much of the land that could be targeted is in sheep production. Between 2017 and 2022 the UK produced on average 300,000 tonnes of sheep meat per annum⁶ and in the same period exported some 25% of production. This is over a period where consumption

of sheep meat in the UK in 2023 is estimated to fall by 21% against the 2019 figure.

We see this leaves space for appropriate and noncontroversial land use change into forestry, and this is what the team at Scottish Woodlands do, delivering over 40% of the planting approved by the Scottish Government in 2022/23.

Using our specialised teams, we carry out thorough site assessments and surveys to identify constraints such as vulnerable species, habitats, and peatland. An important part of this is detailed community and stakeholder engagement followed by full analysis of the findings of these surveys and consultations to design woodlands to meet our clients' objectives.

Often these objectives are based on commercial production, with nearly 60% of what we plant being productive conifer. The balance is made up of productive and native broadleaf and designed open land providing space for long term habitat development and ecological enhancement.

We need productive woodlands, and we should not be shy at shouting from the rooftops about the key role they play in decarbonising our economy, mitigating over 6.5x⁷ more carbon than similar areas of native woodland over a 50 year period, along with the multitude of other benefits they provide society.

More open dialogue is required on the future of a diversified land use in upland UK to help meet all our needs, and we should welcome that discussion with open arms.



3. <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/agricultural-land-use-in-the-united-kingdom>
4. <https://www.theccc.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/Net-Zero-The-UKs-contribution-to-stopping-global-warming.pdf>
5. <https://www.woodlandtrust.org.uk/media/51158/integrating-trees-on-farms-and-crofts-in-scotland.pdf>
6. <https://ahdb.org.uk/lamb-market-outlook>
7. <https://www.forestresearch.gov.uk/publications/quantifying-the-sustainable-forestry-carbon-cycle-report-download-page/>



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INCREASED INTEREST IN RENEWABLES OPPORTUNITIES

The past few years have seen an increasing level of activity in the UK renewables market which has strengthened yet further over the past 12 months due to the impact of recent economic and political drivers.

The Scottish Government's ambitious target for net zero emissions of greenhouse gases by 2045 logically requires an escalation in renewable power generation if targets are to be met. World events, such as the war in Ukraine, have focussed attention on fuel security not least due to the considerable power price rises witnessed over the past 12 months. Furthermore, the recent introduction of the National Planning Framework 4 may provide developers with a more level playing field for planning applications for renewables projects than existed previously.

All of these issues have combined to generate renewed interest from development companies for a range of renewable technologies. Opportunities for solar, wind farms, energy storage and hydrogen production in combination and in isolation are now keenly sought by a variety of developers. The perceived opportunities in the UK have prompted interest from new overseas companies with mature renewables operations in Europe, Scandinavia and the United States adding further competition to other developers with more long established UK operations.

Opportunities need not involve extensive land areas as compensatory replanting requirements and

improved turbine technologies dictate that keyholing is the norm for wind farms in forestry situations with minimal crop removal. Additionally, parties with land close to operational sub-stations, that have existing spare capacity, could secure interest from developers seeking stand-alone battery storage developments which have minimal development footprints.

Many landowners have seen developers come and go previously but numerous sites that were not taken forward in the past or indeed that were even refused at the planning stage are now being re-assessed, redesigned and taken forward by different developers.

Suffice to say that if a developer has an interest in any renewable opportunities on your ground there will be a number of parties similarly interested and it would pay to review the full spectrum of opportunities available before deciding on any particular developer to enter into contracts with. Scottish Woodlands have a long track record in negotiating development agreements for landowners both over forestry sites and open hill land and with the recent tenders we have arranged for clients revealing the full strength of the current market we are well placed to assist with negotiations on your behalf.



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SCOTTISH WOODLANDS MANAGER WINS TOP INDUSTRY AWARD

Neil White of Scottish Woodlands Ltd has won a prestigious leadership prize at the forestry industry's premier awards ceremony.



Tom R Bruce Jones (left) and Neil White (right)

He was presented with the Tom A Bruce-Jones Memorial Award for a Future Leader in the Forest Industry at the annual awards dinner hosted by forestry and wood trade body Confor.

The judges highlighted the work that Neil, Branch Manager (Forestry) at Scottish Woodlands' Perth office, is doing to develop young talent at the firm - and how is improving his own skills too.

They said he was *"already a rounded, confident, highly competent senior manager, but continues to undertake significant training to hone his skills - while still being heavily involved with some of the UK's largest forests."*

Neil's work in leading the mentoring and training on Scottish Woodlands' Ltd Graduate Programme was also noted.

He was presented with the award by Tom R Bruce Jones, Chairman of James Jones & Sons, whose late father gave his name to the award.

Neil White said: *"It's a real honour to win this award, and I am privileged to be part of such a great team - which has an incredible focus on developing the forestry skills of young people."*

"One young graduate at Scottish Woodlands told me he found the job thrilling. I find it thrilling too and I say to everyone here, never lose that thrill."

Neil was named as winner from a shortlist of three, which also included Miriam Jones-Walters of Natural Resource Wales, and Dr Kate Palmer, of Pryor & Rickett Silviculture.

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



Ian Robinson, Forestry Director of Scottish Woodlands, Ltd, said: *"Neil is a well-deserved recipient of this award. He is already making a huge contribution to Scottish Woodlands Ltd and I am confident he will reach even greater heights with the company and in the wider forestry industry."*

The Awards were held at Surgeon's Quarter in Edinburgh and also saw the presentation of the Changing Attitudes Award, sponsored by Scottish Woodlands Ltd, to Tom Barnes of Vastern Timber.



Màiri McAllan, Scotland's Environment and Land Reform Minister (since promoted to Cabinet Secretary for Net Zero and Just Transition), told guests that she was proud to have responsibility for forestry, which she described as "a thriving and successful industry looking to the future, and to succeed in a changing world".

Forestry was "integral" to delivering an enormous range of economic, environmental and social benefits, she said, adding: *"But we must challenge ourselves to be adaptive and better."*

Ian Robinson of Scottish Woodlands Ltd with 'Changing Attitudes Award' finalists Liz Sharkey of Sharkey Forestry (left) and Katy Davies of Agrecruiting Staff (right).

"How do we secure more carbon sequestration, biodiversity recovery, improved economic activity and foster a good relationship with communities, while ensuring a sustainable supply of timber for the wood-using industry?"

Murdo Fraser, Conservative MSP for Mid Scotland and Fife, has tabled a motion in the Scottish Parliament congratulating Neil White on winning the award.

It says: *"The Parliament congratulates Neil White, Branch Manager of the Perth office of Scottish Woodlands Ltd, who has won a prestigious leadership prize; notes that Neil won the Tom A Bruce-Jones Memorial Award for Future Leader in the Forest Industry at the Confor Awards 2023, an annual event hosted by the forestry and wood trade body, Confor; understands that the judges highlighted the work that Neil is doing to develop young talent at the firm, while also improving his own skills, with his work on leading the mentoring and training on the Scottish Woodlands graduate programme also being noted, and wishes Neil and Scottish Woodlands all the best for the future."*



Award Winners alongside Mairi McAllan (centre), Cabinet Secretary for Net Zero and Just Transition, and Eleanor O'Neill of Confor (far right)

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AT SCOTTISH WOODLANDS

During national lockdowns, local forests were rediscovered by many community members as a forgotten escape right at their doorstep. This connection and familiarity with the forests has been intensified through the climate emergency which refocused attention on forests as part of the solution toward NetZero and a greener agenda. Recent land reform movements have also raised the profile of forest ownership in an effort to provide a more transparent view into forest ownership and community buy-in. Forest Manager and Chartered Surveyor Lorna Stewart working the Dingwall office noted “*Community engagement is a key focus of the forthcoming Land Reform legislation. The reforms seek to increase transparency surrounding land ownership in Scotland and the way it is managed.*” The spotlight has truly turned to forestry in Scotland and **now more than ever people are engaging with forests.**

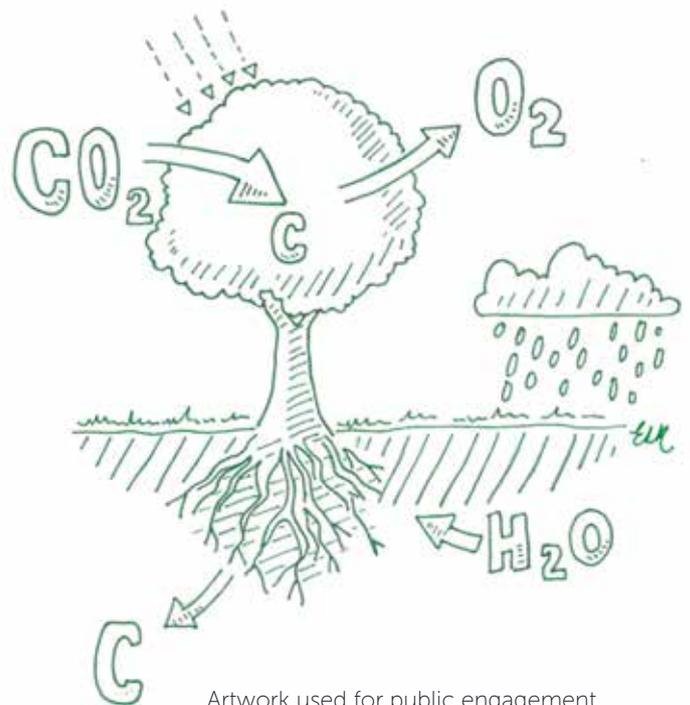


Word cloud created from forestry consultation exercises.

As a result of increased attention, the forest industry recognises a need to raise the standard of how it engages with people. Long gone are the days when putting up a sign was enough to satisfy a largely disinterested or stand-offish community. Forestry projects require carefully choreographed, inclusive, and dynamic approaches to engagement with an ever more informed and highly motivated public.

Early-stage public engagement is critical to woodland planning, landowner objectives are polished into a well-balanced design taking into account the local social setting resulting in a more successful project overall. This is especially true for privately owned land where objectives are owner-led and feedback from community engagement is vital to ensure opportunities are not missed in the forest design.

Scottish Woodlands has been hard at work rethinking public engagement in the forestry sector. As part of the company's graduate training programme, new staff are given focused training modules to aid in planning for public engagement. Led by key industry groups such as Confor, Scottish Woodlands has also been participating in a pilot stakeholder engagement training course aiming to develop an industry wide programme to promote a more open and transparent culture within the industry when it comes to public engagement.



Artwork used for public engagement posters created by Scottish Woodlands Carbon Manager Emma Kerr to convey carbon sequestration.

Forestry projects require carefully choreographed, inclusive, and dynamic approaches to engagement with an ever more informed and highly motivated public.

This training and industry wide collaboration work is designed to improve how the company engages with the public for a variety of projects ranging from rewilding to commercial forest planning. Tools are provided for managers to think holistically about each project and the unique social and cultural setting within which they sit. Engagement can then be designed to provide the best outcomes in terms of community participation. The company is using a variety of techniques including QR codes on signs, project specific websites and online materials, public drop-in sessions, village hall meetings, site tours, and focused engagement with interest groups. The overall aim is to identify opportunities where project design can be shaped to minimise negative impacts and maximise positive outcomes. One example of this currently in development is Glen Dye Moor, a new woodland creation site. Every year, the local Scout troop visits Glen Dye Moor for a camp-out. The area where the Scouts camp is, is currently open land with no forest cover, and this was planned to be kept bare. Following discussions with the troop leaders, this informal camping area will be planted with low density trees at targeted locations to provide future shelter and opportunity for hammocks to be used once the trees are full grown. This small change to the design of the new woodland produces a positive outcome resulting in mutual benefits. Scottish Woodlands are doing more to replicate this type of constructive engagement across all of our projects. Engaging with the public doesn't always result in big forest design changes, but it can result in meaningful ones.



SWL Director Neil Crookston speaking with community members about a forestry project.

As Scottish Woodlands continues to promote public engagement skills amongst its staff, more direct engagement with communities continues. Public knowledge about forestry varies and as one of the largest forest management firms in Scotland, the company strives to increase public awareness and knowledge about the forestry sector. Charles Gittins, Senior Forest Manager worked with a group of primary schools, local to the Chirk office, to organise the planting of trees by pupils as part of the Queen's Green Canopy. He noted, "the activities highlighted the importance of trees in the locality, complemented the school syllabus and will encourage the pupils to monitor and maintain the trees." Projects like this ensure not only that we share knowledge, information, and experiences with the next generation, but also ensure that we remain a part of the community with which we engage. Many of our managers live locally to where they work, and the communities they engage with are the same communities they are a part of.



Megan Parker
Senior Forest Planner

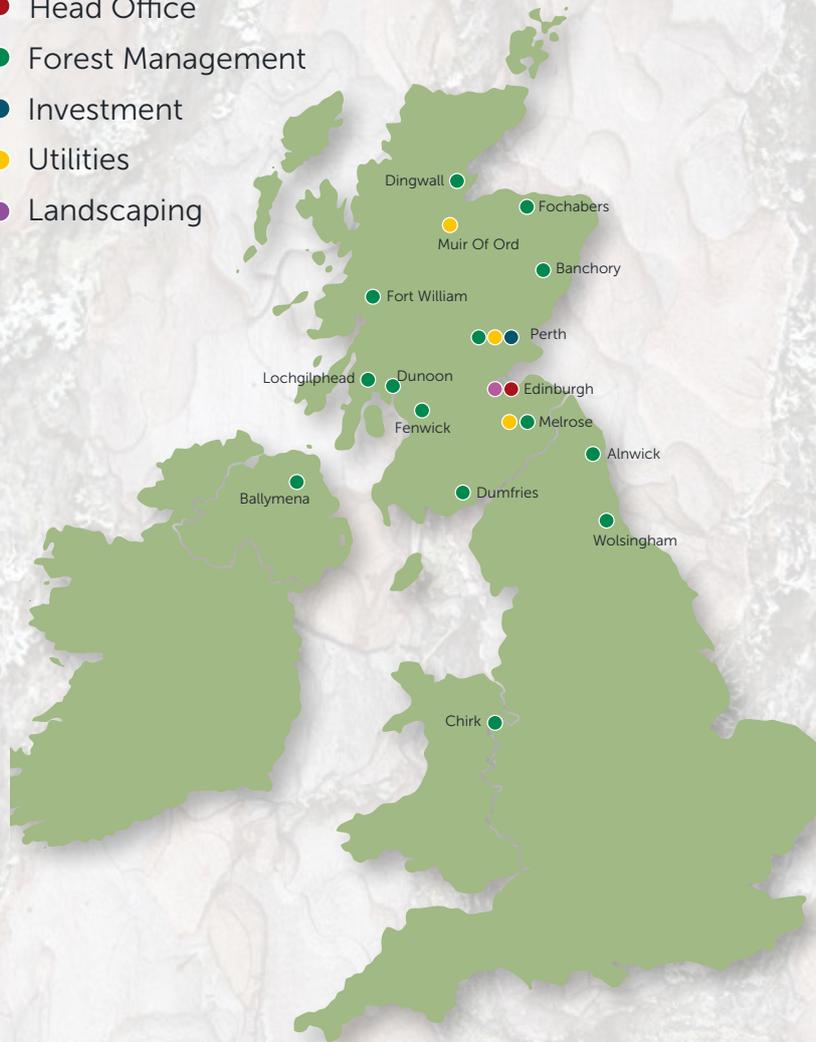
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MAP SHOWING CURRENT OFFICES

Departments / Services:

- Head Office
- Forest Management
- Investment
- Utilities
- Landscaping



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Many of the images used throughout this edition
were taken by members of staff as part of
the SWL Photo Competition

