



Woodlands' View

SCOTTISH WOODLANDS NEWSLETTER | Summer 2025

..... Ali's stunning
sunrise wins photo
competition

Also In This Edition

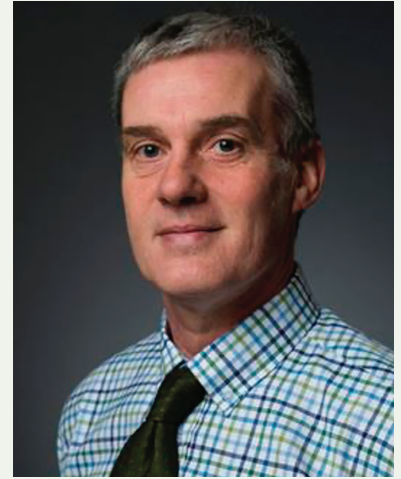
- Peatland Update •
- Timber Harvesting •
- UK Forestry Investment •
- Woodland Carbon •
- New Woodland Creation Opportunities •

Scottish Woodlands Photography Competition – WINNER – Ali McTavish

Growing a Sustainable Future



WELCOME TO OUR SUMMER NEWSLETTER 2025



Ian Robinson, Managing Director

In 2025, Scottish Woodlands Ltd is once again attending a full schedule of shows, including the Royal Highland Show, Turriff Show, Moy Game Fair, Royal Welsh Show and Black Isle Show. In addition to this our Group company, RTS Forestry will have stands at the Scottish Game Fair and Turriff Show.

Despite the reduction in the 2024/25 Forestry budget, Scottish Woodlands Ltd planted just over 3000 hectares of new woodlands in Scotland last year. This is the highest annual figure since the 1980s and we hope to match this figure in future years.

The timber market has been challenging and this has not been helped by the loss of the pest-free zone in west Scotland and the recent Irish windblow damage. However, we are seeing increasing demand and our long-standing relationship with timber processors is helping our clients address marketing challenges.

In December 2024 we bought RTS Forestry, a well-established company based in Crieff. This has helped us cement our position as the premier forestry management company in Scotland. It has also helped to diversify our business into wood fuel production and project work.

We continue to "Grow our Own" managers via our graduate development programme, which is now entering its 9th year. During 2025 we again plan to recruit a further six new graduates.

Interest in forestry as a long-term, resilient asset class continues, and we work closely with landowners and institutional and private investors to source and manage woodland assets and land for planting across the UK. Our team combines decades of practical experience with robust financial and carbon modelling capabilities, ensuring we deliver environmental, social, and financial value for our clients. We are also supporting a growing number of clients in understanding Natural Capital and carbon opportunities, integrating these into their land use strategies

If you're thinking about felling and replanting your woodland or considering 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..



E: ian.robinson@scottishwoodlands.co.uk
T: 0131 451 5154 | M: 07778 772 358



WORLD WAR TWO PLANE PART FOUND IN ANGUS GLENS

Part of a plane which crashed in the Angus Glens in 1944, killing eight airmen, is to go on display after being discovered exactly 80 years after the crash - by a Scottish Woodlands Regional Manager.



Neil White, Regional Manager (Central-East), based in Perth, was working at a peatland restoration site at Tulchan of Glenisla last September when he found a shiny smooth piece of metal buried in the turf.

"I was a reservist in the Parachute Regiment, and I've spent a bit of time around planes, so I knew instantly that it was part of an aircraft," said Mr White.

Further inquiries revealed it was from a Handley Page Halifax LL414, a military plane which took off from RAF Sandtoft in Lincolnshire on 31 May 1944 for a training exercise - but never returned.

Eight airmen, six of whom were Canadian and two English, were in the plane when it crashed in Angus. There were no survivors, and the six Canadians were buried in a Commonwealth War Graves site at Sleepyhillock Cemetery, near Montrose.

After alerting the Ministry of Defence to the find, Mr White handed the part over last week to Montrose Air Station Heritage Centre.

The Heritage Centre is based on the site of the UK's oldest operational military airfield, RAF Montrose, first used in 1913 - and during his investigations, Mr White discovered that it had a very close link to the aircraft.

Sian Brewis, Display Coordinator at the Heritage Centre, who received the part from Mr White along with Chair of the Centre, Stuart Archibald, said: "The mountain rescue team from RAF Montrose recovered the bodies of all the men from the 1944 plane crash and brought them back to the air station. The military funerals of the six Canadians would have been organised and held by the air station. Therefore, the museum has a very relevant link to what was found and was very pleased to accept the part."

"We thank Neil White and Scottish Woodlands for the care and attention with which they have dealt with this find. We will set up a special display using the part to highlight this significant and tragic event in the history of RAF Montrose."

Mr White said: "It was important to me to follow the proper procedures, so I contacted the Ministry of Defence for a licence to excavate the crash site. After obtaining the correct paperwork, we carried out further excavations, but no other parts were found, so we were able to continue with the peatland restoration project."

"While the site was being excavated, I contacted the heritage centre and offered to donate the part to them. I'm delighted that the wreckage will be well looked-after and treated with appropriate respect to honour those who died in the crash - and allow future generations to understand more about this tragic story, and remember those who died."

While at the heritage centre, Mr White wrote a message of remembrance on a poppy and pinned it to their memorial wall: **"Remembering the Crew of LL414. We will remember."**

Ian Robinson, Managing Director of Scottish Woodlands Ltd, said: "This story illustrates how seriously and professionally we take all aspects of our work. It was an exciting find for Neil, and he was determined to go through all the right channels to ensure the site work proceeded appropriately."

"Peatland restoration is an increasingly significant part of our work, which complements our forestry operations. We were the first mainstream forestry company to appoint a specialist Peatland Project Officer in Erin Stoll and her work as part of our wider carbon team is a very important part of our business."

Peatland restoration is the process of restoring degraded peatlands to a healthy state. Peatlands are important for regulating the climate and water, and providing habitats for wildlife - but 80% of the UK's peatland are currently in a degraded state. The restoration project at Tulchan of Glenisla was supported by Cairngorm National Park and Peatland ACTION.



Operator at work blocking artificial drains using a 'wave dam and zippering' technique March 2025

GLEN DYE NEW ENTRANTS SCHEME

Expanding the Peatland Workforce with Peatland Action

Over winter 24/25, the second phase of peatland restoration took place on Glen Dye Moor, a large upland estate in Aberdeenshire, near Banchory. Phase 2 has been able to put a further 300 of the 1,800 hectares (ha) of degraded peatland on the estate on the 'road to recovery' by repairing areas of erosion, blocking artificial drains and rewetting the peat.

The large size and accessibility of Phase 2 allowed work to be split into two separate projects running in conjunction through the same work season. The relatively less complex site on the East of the public road provided a novel opportunity to run a 'new entrants' site for contractors new to Peatland Action funded restoration works.

With an ambitious target of setting 250,000 ha of degraded peatland on the road to recovery by 2030,

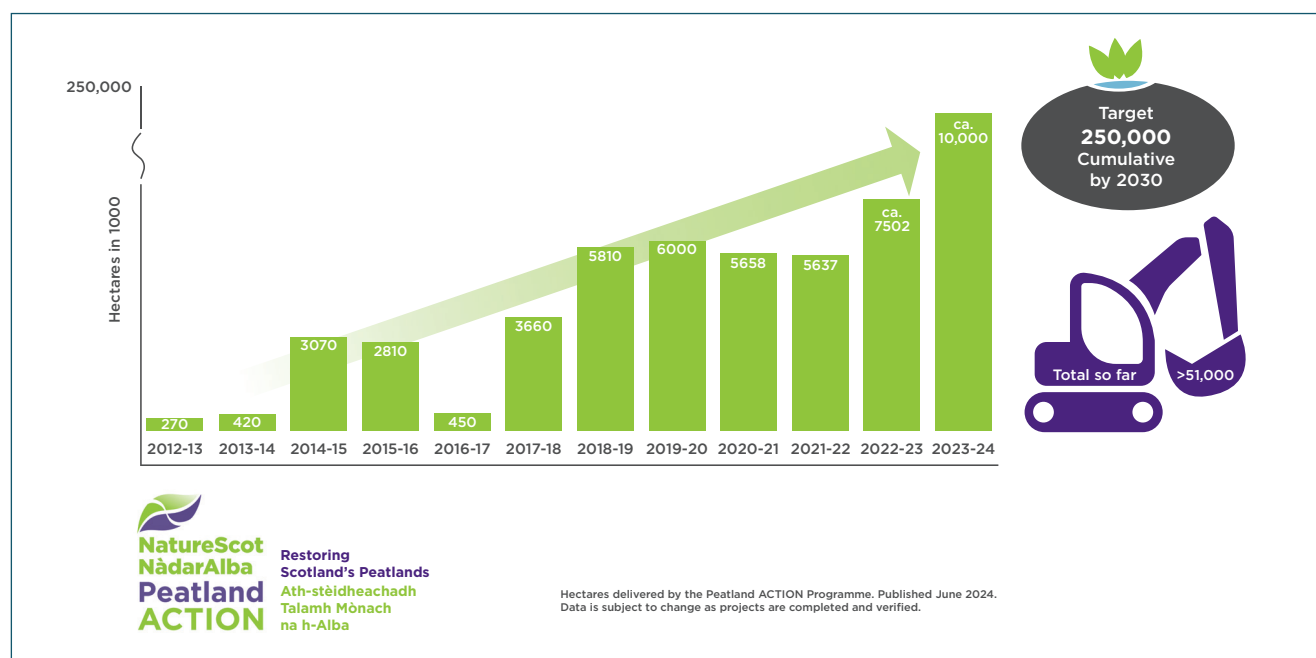
Peatland Action has been invested in expanding the peatland workforce and developing local contractor capacity and skills. One of the ways in which Peatland Action has been stimulating capacity building in practical restoration is by developing contractor skills base and experience within Peatland Action projects. *New entrants'* sites aim to develop skills of operators new to peatland restoration within a real project delivery setting.



The site at Glen Dye Moor made a suitable candidate site benefitting from excellent accessibility and presented a mixture of erosive features enabling contractors to develop and apply a range of techniques from wave dam and zippering of artificial drains to reprofiling larger hags and gullies. Also, the position of the site within a wider phase permitted high hectareage delivery over the season to be maintained.



During the operations, technical mentoring for the operators was funded by Peatland Action to ensure best practice in technique development and grounding in hydrological principles.



While the site presented some challenges – not least the winter weather! – the team have been able to deliver positive restoration outcomes for ~100ha of degraded Peatland and learn from the experience to better understand the delivery considerations for future new entrants' schemes.

During excavation work in late April 2025, the contractors on site encountered an unexpected historical artefact - what appeared to be unexploded military ordnance.

When undertaking environmental restoration projects on land with historical military use, there's always potential for discovering unexploded ordnance (UXO). In this instance, the team discovered what turned out to be an anti-tank projectile, likely to date back to military training exercises conducted between the World Wars. Such discoveries present immediate safety risks to workers and the public, requiring specialised expertise beyond standard forestry management.

Scottish Woodlands implemented a comprehensive safety protocol:

1. Contractors immediately halted all work and evacuated the site;
2. Scottish Woodlands Ltd, as site managers, were notified with precise location details (using What3Words);
3. Forest Manager James Macpherson-Fletcher contacted local police with detailed information and photographic evidence;
4. The Ministry Of Defence Explosive Ordnance Disposal (EOD) team based at Dreghorn Barracks, Edinburgh was engaged;
5. A 100-metre safety cordon was established and monitored;
6. Military specialists assessed and safely removed the object.

The UXO was identified as a 6lb quick-fire anti-tank shot/projectile, likely to be from inter-war military training exercises by military personnel. The EOD team confirmed it was inert and posed no threat. The incident demonstrated Scottish Woodlands' commitment to safety protocols and efficient crisis management - with clear guidance established for any similar discoveries in the future.

To learn more about this peatland restoration project you can also visit the dedicated Glen Dye Moor project page.



Dr Erin Stoll

E: Erin.stoll@scottishwoodlands.co.uk

T: 01738 505 277 | M: 07391 048 457



PLANTING TREES - BY HELICOPTER!

A helicopter has been used to lay out quarter of a million trees for planting on a remote site managed by Scottish Woodlands Ltd on the Isle of Mull.

The Scottish Woodlands team based in Lochgilphead, Argyll, worked with Skyhook Helicopters and Scottish Tree Planting to get almost 250,000 young broadleaved trees into place last week.

Eddie Addis, General Manager (Management and Services) for Scottish Woodlands Ltd, said: "On remote and challenging sites like this, there are safety risks with trying to lay out such a large number of trees using traditional methods. It also requires a lot of resources and construction of built infrastructure, such as high specification ATV tracks and watercourse crossings."

"The high costs of the hire of a helicopter are offset by many other factors: far less risk to operators; a reduced need for labour; the large savings on infrastructure costs; and the reduced environmental impact of not having to build infrastructure in what will be a carbon-eating new native woodland!"

Eoghan Anderson, Senior Forest Manager with Scottish Woodlands Ltd, added: "Despite the high

operating costs for a helicopter, this system of layout can often be better than traditional methods - as long as you work with the best contractors."

"That's what we did with Skyhook Helicopters and Scottish Tree Planting. Working with high-quality, trusted partners is essential for the delivery of such large, complex and challenging projects, especially if the weather is against you, which is often the case in Argyll! The results on this one speak for themselves, thanks to all involved!"

Mr Anderson said the quarter of a million trees laid out by helicopter was a small percentage of what was being planted on "a very large and complex new woodland creation site".

Over one million trees are being planted on site - of a range of species, predominately native broadleaved species however a small proportion of commercial species such as Sitka Spruce are being planted too - close to Salen on the Isle of Mull.



Over one million trees are being planted on site - of a range of species, predominately native broadleaved species however a small proportion of commercial species such as Sitka Spruce are being planted too - close to Salen on the Isle of Mull.



Tipperty team-work makes the dream work!

Working with the very best contractors is essential to creating high-quality modern forests that deliver multiple benefits.

That's the clear message from a new video by Scottish Woodlands Ltd, showcasing a large new woodland creation site at Tipperty in South Aberdeenshire.

More than 650,000 trees are being planted at Tipperty, near Auchenblae, a combination of commercial timber planting, but also a significant mix of native broadleaf trees.

Neil Crookston, Director (North) for Scottish Woodlands Ltd, says: "This is a high-quality, multi-purpose forest which will deliver major benefits for the environment and economy. We are working with excellent contractors who share our vision to create a high-quality site."

Oli Hands, Regional Manager for North-east Scotland for Scottish Woodlands Ltd, describes the three Scottish-based contractors as "absolutely outstanding"



The ground preparation was done by Arbuckle Contractors, based just north of Falkirk, while the fencing work was completed by Hayfield Fencing of Inverurie, Aberdeenshire. "We are up against deer, hares and

rabbits all trying to eat our trees, so the quality of fencing is really important," says Oli.

The planting has been carried out by Laurent Bienfait Woodlands Services and in the film, Laurent praises Scottish Woodlands and his fellow contractors. He says: "It has to be team-work. The ground preparation and

fencing is second to none and I am pleased to add my name to this really good team."

Both Laurent and Oli highlight the opportunities for local people to enjoy the site. Oli says: "Tipperty has been designed to tick multiple objectives of sustainability, including economic, environmental and social elements. Within the scheme, we've designed circular walks so that local people can come here and enjoy the developing woodlands."

The video also features Callum Gammie, who recently completed the Scottish Woodlands Graduate Development Programme. He says: "This has been a great first project for me, just the scale of it and spending time with lots of different contractors and working with our environmental team. It's got everything and being able to see it unfold has been great for learning."

Watch the Tipperty video on our YouTube page:





ALI'S STUNNING SUNRISE WINS PHOTO COMPETITION

Forest Manager Ali McTavish has won the Scottish Woodlands staff photography competition for 2025, with a stunning picture of a sunrise in the Scottish Borders.

Ali's picture, taken at Duns Castle, was selected by competition judge, professional photographer and videographer Phil Wilkinson. He said:

"I really like the lovely light and the silhouette of the reeds in the foreground - and it's really well-exposed."

Ali said:

"I'm really pleased with how the shot turned out and delighted to have won. I was out for a walk with my dog by the ponds and had to capture the reeds dancing in the morning sun!"



Photographs by Charlotte Cavey-Wilcox, Regional Manager in South East Scotland, and Eoghan Anderson, Senior Forest Manager at Lochgilphead, Argyll, were chosen by Phil as runners-up.



Charlotte's snowy picture was taken from the forest road in Menzion, looking out across Talla Reservoir to Hearstanes Forest in the Scottish Borders.

"This is a favourite viewpoint of mine, and the snow just added an extra dimension to it,"

Charlotte said.



Eoghan's photograph was taken at Glen Forsa on Mull, where fencing works are being carried out by Fleming Forestry Fencing Ltd. He said:

"This is part of 35 km of deer fencing going up on this project to keep Mull's significant population of red deer away from our newly planted trees."

Phil, an experienced national newspaper photographer who now runs his own business, said: *"Charlotte's image is beautifully composed, with the snow-covered trees leading you further into the landscape."*

"Eoghan's image is also very well-composed, and this time it's the fence leading you naturally into a glorious landscape. Both runners-up also make superb use of the light."

David Robertson, Investment and Business Development Director with Scottish Woodlands Ltd, said: *"I'm delighted to see such an excellent winner and runners-up for our annual competition - and thanks so much to Phil for casting his expert eye over the entries. The competition is a chance to remind*


ourselves of the beautiful places we work, and to celebrate those landscapes, the forestry industry and rural communities - and the great people who work for Scottish Woodlands."

Phil Wilkinson has worked on a number of Scottish Woodlands projects, including filming a video at the 2024 Royal Highland Show - and creating the Flintshire Woodlands film to highlight the work of the business in north Wales and the west of England.

Another of Phil's videos, on a high-quality woodland creation scheme managed by Scottish Woodlands Ltd in North-east Scotland, will be released soon. His excellent photographs still regularly appear in national newspapers, and his website is here.



TIMBER HARVESTING



It is often the case when compiling an overview of the timber market, both from a domestic and international viewpoint, that it can be difficult to know where to start. It would be fair to say that the twist and turns of the timber market continues to keep everyone on their toes!

Although new challenges come along, whether that is economic headwinds, 'geopolitical rollercoasters' (which one?!), or supply and demand factors coming into play the one standout constant is the underlying demand for timber. Yes, some sectors of the timber processing industry remain in challenging times, but the mood music suggests that improvements are here, and we can all look with greater optimism into 2025 and beyond. Regardless of the challenges the industry's resilience stands out to me as something which we should all be proud of, an attribute which I am sure is always helped by the fact that we are all dealing with the 'here and now' and future sustainable building material of choice.

We still have a long road to go (no pun intended!) and the Government's *'Timber in Construction Roadmap 2025'* is a start in that journey. National promotion and campaigning for the use of timber in construction is a priority for us all. The built environment accounts for 25% of the UK's annual greenhouse gas emissions,

greater use of timber in construction gives us the opportunity to change that, through carbon sequestration and decarbonisation of concrete, steel and cement.

The UK housing crisis remains steadfast with demand far outstripping supply, but now we may have something to tentatively hang our hats on as the Government has pledged to build 1.5 million new homes in the UK over its term. So, we can expect a huge surge for demand for timber in UK home construction then? Well yes, and no! In Scotland, timber frame construction has long been used in around 90% of new builds over the past forty years. In contrast, only a fraction of homes, less than 10%, built in England employ timber frames. In 2022, approximately 190,000 homes were constructed across the UK, with about 40,000 of those being timber framed. A staggering 25,000 of these were in Scotland, while England contributed fewer than 14,000, with Northern Ireland and Wales collectively accounting for just over 3,500.



The construction industry can and must do better in embracing timber in new house construction. To achieve net-zero by 2050 reducing the embodied carbon emissions in new builds should be a major driver for increased use of timber in construction in England. To achieve this quantifying embodied carbon in construction projects and understanding and adopting a whole life carbon approach to new buildings is a must and can only benefit the increased use of timber in such projects. Sector led initiatives are out there now, such as the *'Future Homes - Embodied and Whole Life Carbon: 2023-2025 Implementation Plan for the Homebuilding Industry'*, which aims to develop a roadmap and implementation plan to support the sector in measuring and reducing whole life carbon. The Government also has released the *'Construction Playbook'* which sets to advise contracting authorities to adopt a whole life carbon approach. It also provides guidance on whole life carbon assessments and other best practice for procuring decarbonised construction.

After two years of falling output, the Construction Products Association (CPA) predicts that all new housing will grow by 5.5% in 2025 followed by a further growth of 7.6% in 2026. The Repair, Maintenance, and Improvement (RMI) sector is predicted to increase by 2.8% in 2025 and a further 3.6% in 2026. RMI output remains to exceed activity levels pre-Covid.

As extreme weather events are becoming the 'new normal' fencing demand remains strong throughout the UK, which in part is offsetting a subdued carcassing (C16) market. The pallet sector also remains positive showing steady growth in 2024 and continuing to do so in 2025. The industrial small roundwood market has and continues to be consistently strong, feeding into the panel board, pulpwood and biomass sector.

The latest timber statistics on timber imports into the UK for 2024 point to marginal gains over 2023. With import volumes improving from March onwards compared to 2023, pointing towards increased demand throughout 2024. The rise in value of 2024 imports of 1.5% compared to 2023, relates to volume only with no change in average price.

I mentioned 'geopolitical rollercoasters' in my opening paragraph, undoubtedly this is a too much of a light-hearted assessment of the global political world stage just now. Just like the Scottish weather no one can really predict with any degree of certainty what the next day will be like, and this is certainly true in the US right now.

The two 'big Ts' Trump and tariffs continue to disrupt the lumber market, with U.S. lumber prices having climbed to their highest levels in more than three years, driven by impending tariff increases on

Canadian imports, seasonal demand, and a tightening supply. *Canada supplies up to 25% of the US market and the US is preparing to raise tariffs from 15% to possibly 40%.* Trump's strategy of pushing up timber production and processing in the US is a risky tactic as replacing Canadian imports at scale will prove to be a challenge, given the time and capital required to expand domestic sawmill capacity. US lumber buyers are now looking to Europe for additional volumes but not one country is immune from US tariffs, especially Europe! Equally, US imposed tariffs may push Canadian lumber into Europe and Asia. The volatility in the US market will only raise affordability concerns and reduce confidence throughout the supply chain from processors to distributors and end users.

Looking further afield China has faced various issues throughout 2024, mainly a weak housing market, along with seasonal demand fluctuations, and substantial port inventory build-up of timber volumes. To counteract this the Chinese government implemented bold policies and incentives to stimulate new housing demand. In early March of this year, China suspended imports of U.S. logs, citing concerns over pest infestations detected in shipments. Unsurprisingly, this action is part of broader trade tensions between China and the United States, with China also imposing tariffs on various US agricultural products.

Like that of the UK Europe experienced a subdued market in 2024 on sawn timber prices, although acute roundwood shortages, rising roundwood prices, and higher processing costs resulted in European mills running at low margins, with many operating at a loss. This resulted in mills taking out production and in some cases closures. However, moving through 2025 the European sawmills are now benefiting from strong timber exports to the US, where supply shortages and a rebound in housing construction have raised demand and welcomed improvements in prices of sawn timber. Lower interest rates in Europe and improved financing conditions are also stimulating demand in growth for timber for construction.

It is often said that '*the one constant is change*' and it no one can deny the world stage of that! Regardless of the challenges faced throughout the globe, the underlying demand for timber continues to rise and we can with confidence predict (unlike the Scottish weather!) that demand and competition for timber supplies and wood products will rise too.



Andrew Tuft
Harvesting & Marketing Director

E: Andrew.tuft@scottishwoodlands.co.uk
T: 01835 823 353 | M: 07850 098 701





FORESTRY: A NATIONAL ASSET DRIVING NATURE, INDUSTRY AND CLIMATE ACTION

Forestry in the UK is flourishing—and so too is public awareness of its immense value. Once viewed as a quiet backdrop to the countryside, our forests are now firmly centre stage: boosting biodiversity, fuelling the timber economy, supporting rural communities, and playing a key role in delivering our national climate targets.

At Scottish Woodlands Ltd, we see first-hand the growing energy behind forestry. From landowners exploring woodland creation to investors returning to the timber market, there's a clear shift in momentum. The conversation has changed - from whether to plant, to how best to do it. From questions about value, to conversations about opportunity.

Forestry by the Numbers

- **13%** of UK land is forested, **19%** of Scotland
- **9,000–10,000 hectares(ha)/year:** current planting capacity in Scotland
- **37,000 ha:** Committee on Climate Change's recommended UK annual planting targets (Scotland target is 18,000 ha)
- **£5.6bn** annual GVA of UK Forestry Sector

Biodiversity: Forests Full of Life

Across the UK, biodiversity is under pressure - but forestry is part of the solution. New woodland creation, when designed and managed well, provides vital habitats for wildlife and helps restore natural systems.

Whether it's native broadleaf planting to support wildlife corridors and woodland birds, or well-structured mixed conifers that host red squirrels, fungi, and insects, modern forestry is rooted in environmental value. We're seeing increasing interest in integrated approaches - blending commercial timber production with ecological enhancement and long-term landscape design.

This integrated approach is central to our work at Tippetry in South Aberdeenshire - a large new woodland creation scheme of 250 hectares (about 600 acres). Conifer trees are being planted to deliver a commercial timber crop - at a time when the UK needs greater timber supplies for

the future - alongside native broadleaf trees. Around 17 species of broadleaf trees and shrubs are being planted on the site, for biodiversity and wider environmental goals - but also to deliver a hardwood crop for furniture making. In the case of the oak trees, they won't be harvested until around 2150!

Forests also support wider ecosystem services: they can improve water quality, stabilise soils, and regulate temperatures. And as more people reconnect with nature, woodlands provide essential green spaces for health and wellbeing.

At Scottish Woodlands Ltd, our environmental planning team ensures every project is ecologically robust. We believe that biodiversity and business can - and must - go hand in hand.



Timber: A Market on the Move

After a period of softening prices, there's renewed cause for optimism in the timber market. Sawmills are busy, construction activity is steady, and demand for homegrown wood is back on the rise. Importantly, UK-grown timber remains a sustainable, low-carbon material in a world increasingly focused on climate-friendly building solutions.

Of course, global dynamics still matter. Trade policy, shipping costs, and economic signals from major markets can all influence the UK sector. There's growing concern

about potential timber-related trade sanctions under a second Trump administration in the US. While such policies may not directly affect UK producers, they could disrupt global trade flows and affect timber values in Europe - something we continue to watch closely.

Despite this, the fundamentals for the UK remain strong. With good silviculture and smart supply chain planning, timber continues to offer reliable returns and growing demand prospects. And that's good news for woodland owners and the wider economy alike.

Forestry's Impact at a Glance

Climate:

Forests remove 32 million tonnes of CO₂ annually

Nature:

Key habitats for over 40 priority species

Economy:

Forestry supports 40,000+ jobs across the UK

Investment:

Long-term, inflation-linked returns

Wellbeing:

Woodland access linked to improved health outcomes

Grants and Growth: The Story Behind the Headlines

There's been much discussion recently around changes to forestry grant support in Scotland, particularly the reduction in capital grant funding from Government. While it's right to scrutinise these changes, it's also important to keep perspective: there is still more than enough money in the system to support 9,000 to 10,000 hectares of new planting per year.

In short, business as usual remains fully funded. For landowners and investors, the message is simple—woodland creation is still very much open for business.

That said, the ambition doesn't stop there. The UK Committee on Climate Change has called for planting levels to rise to 37,000 hectares per year nationally (up from 30,000) to meet our 2050 net zero targets. That's

an ambitious uplift - but a necessary one.

To achieve it, we'll need more than just grants. We'll need streamlined planning, better integration with farming support, continued private sector investment, and a joined-up approach across nations and agencies. Fortunately, forestry is already well-positioned. It's a proven, scalable climate solution with benefits that extend far beyond carbon alone.

Scottish Woodlands Ltd stands ready to help lead the way—providing clients with expert guidance, end-to-end delivery, and the confidence to invest in projects that are future-proof, financially sound, and environmentally robust.

Forest Investments: A Market with Potential

The past year has seen a slowdown in the market for established forests, largely driven by recent dips in timber values. Some buyers have paused to reassess, and some landowners have held off bringing properties to market.

But things are beginning to shift. With timber prices now on an upward trend, these assets are looking increasingly attractive - particularly for long-term investors. Forests that might have seemed fully priced 18 months ago now offer solid value, with income growth potential and long-

term capital appreciation.

More broadly, forestry remains one of the few land-based investments offering tangible, inflation-linked returns alongside significant environmental co-benefits. Add to that the growing potential for carbon income, biodiversity credits and natural capital markets, and it's clear why so many investors are returning to the sector with fresh interest.

A Confident Outlook

In a fast-changing world, forestry offers something rare: a long-term, resilient asset with benefits that cut across sectors and generations. It supports livelihoods, locks up carbon, protects nature, and provides a renewable resource the world needs more of. Yes, challenges remain - from policy shifts to global uncertainty - but the direction of travel is clear. Forestry is not just weathering the storm—it's growing through it.

At Scottish Woodlands Ltd, we're proud to be part of this thriving industry. We're helping clients navigate change, unlock value, and build forests that will stand the test of time.

Thinking of planting or investing in forestry this year? Get in touch—we'd be delighted to help you grow your vision.



David Robertson
Investment and Business Development Director

E: David.robertson@scottishwoodlands.co.uk
T: 01738 505 277 | M: 07795 831 595



Will Woodland Carbon Code be the go-to code in the future?

Since starting the Carbon division at Scottish Woodlands in 2021, my message has been the same; timber forestry is carbon forestry. However, since 2021 there have been updates to the Woodland Carbon Code (WCC) which unfortunately delivers a contradictory message.

The WCC is a scheme endorsed by the UK Government and run by Scottish Forestry. It enables new UK afforestation projects to yield carbon credits that can be traded and used in the domestic voluntary carbon market - if the project meets WCC's rules. To date, WCC has been the go-to mechanism for generating carbon credits from new woodland creation. But is this about to change?

The WCC incorporates a financial additionality test which must show the project will only be planted if the sale of carbon credits renders the project financially viable. If the project finances stack up without the sale of carbon credits, the project does not qualify for WCC. In 2022, the WCC introduced a new test whereby projects must use a standardised model which dictates whether a scheme passes or fails.

Prior to 2022, schemes were assessed on a project-specific basis, allowing a wide variety of woodland projects to be accurately assessed for additionality. Standardising the test, however, has enabled projects comprising a high percentage of minimum intervention broadleaves to pass with flying colours, while any project with a significant percentage of commercial conifer is unlikely to qualify.

This rule change could alter the UK's afforestation landscape. A shift towards more broadleaf planting will have a significant effect on future UK timber supply and carbon locked up in the built environment. As Paul Brannen mentions in his book *Timber! How Wood Can Help Save The World From Climate Breakdown*: "Planting trees is not enough to reduce carbon. We also have to chop them down... and use them in the built environment (and then, of course, replace them with new planting)."

In 2023/2024, the WCC commissioned EY to conduct a review of the code, including the overall process, future frameworks and, importantly, the additionality test. EY followed up the review with a consultation on additionality in late 2024, releasing feedback in March 2025. The EY report and consultation feedback was clear

in its messaging... the additionality test as it stands is not robust, requires flexibility, and the inclusion of project-specific costs - and the option for bespoke financial analysis should be provided to clients who do not wish to assess their scheme via a standardised methodology.

In response, the WCC launched a consultation on a new version of the code, 3.0, along with an updated additionality test in April. Despite the EY report advocating the use of project-specific costs, the test remains standardised. However, it does include a few positive updates: a 13% increase in costs in line with inflation, updated foregone income rates, more accurate representation of tree protection, and removal of the fencing cap. These adjustments to the test are positive and will allow a wider variety of projects to yield truer additionality results. In addition, the timing of additionality is changing. From 1st July 2025 onwards, the version of additionality a project uses will be based on when a project is implemented, rather than using the version at validation. The ability to "lock in" additionality at implementation will provide clients a degree of certainty that additionality will be achieved before trees are planted.

However, if a project has been implemented and planted before 1st July 2025, the consultation proposes these schemes will be unable to use the new version of additionality. This is unfortunate and could see many projects planted between 2022 and 2025 lost in a WCC 'black hole' and unable to generate carbon units. The Scottish Woodlands Carbon Team will be lobbying to prevent this and will be formally responding to the consultation by 10th June 2025.

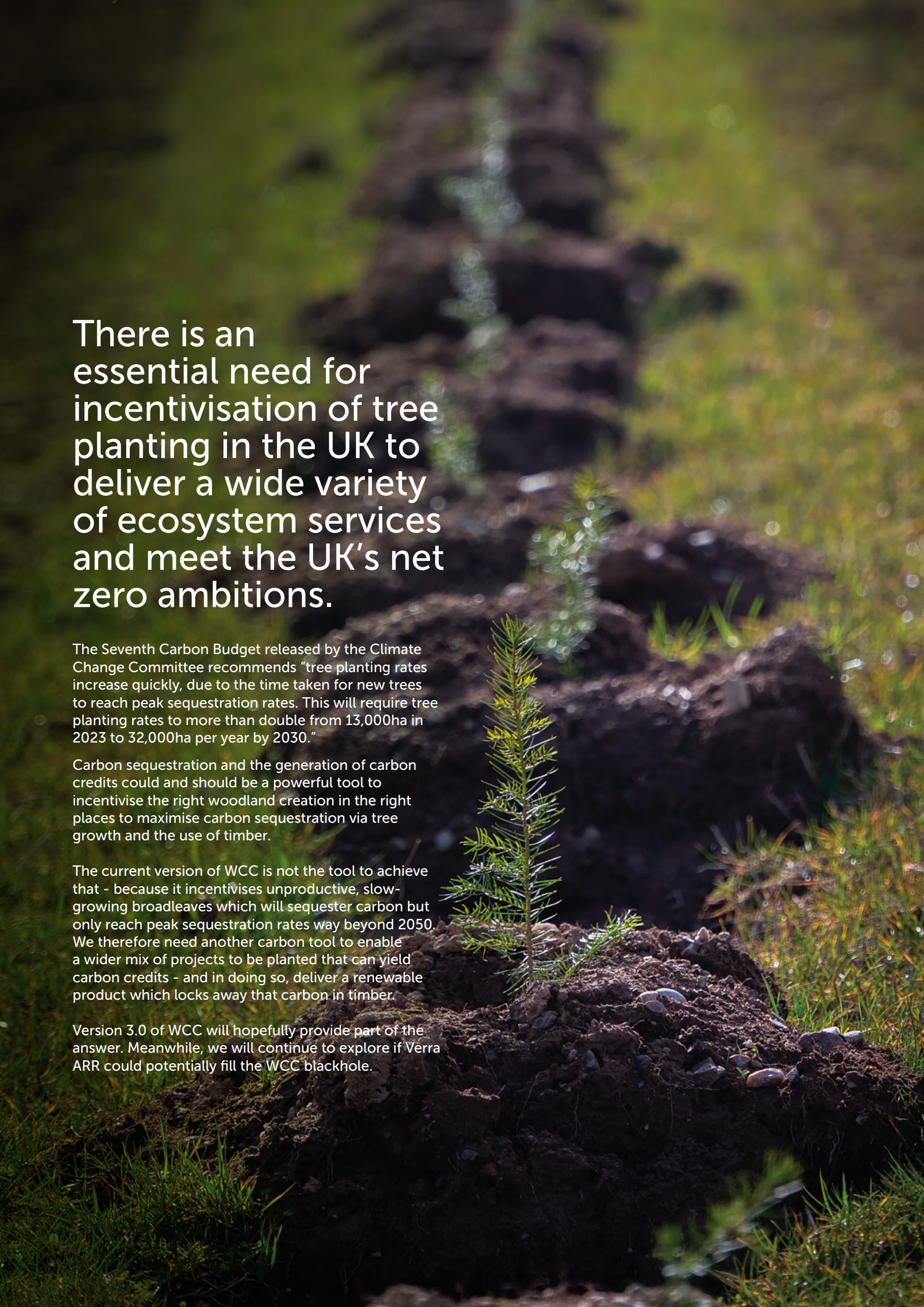
The Carbon Team has therefore been busy assessing alternatives to the WCC. Verra, a Global Carbon Standard Provider, released its Afforestation, Reforestation, and Revegetation (ARR) methodology in September 2023 (VM0047). This quantifies carbon removals from activities that increase the density of trees or other types of woody vegetation. To date, there have been no validated UK Verra ARR projects, but the team is exploring potential application for UK woodland creation projects.



Emma Kerr
Head of Carbon

E: emma.kerr@scottishwoodlands.co.uk
T: 01896 800 831 | M: 07384 818 301





There is an essential need for incentivisation of tree planting in the UK to deliver a wide variety of ecosystem services and meet the UK's net zero ambitions.

The Seventh Carbon Budget released by the Climate Change Committee recommends "tree planting rates increase quickly, due to the time taken for new trees to reach peak sequestration rates. This will require tree planting rates to more than double from 13,000ha in 2023 to 32,000ha per year by 2030."

Carbon sequestration and the generation of carbon credits could and should be a powerful tool to incentivise the right woodland creation in the right places to maximise carbon sequestration via tree growth and the use of timber.

The current version of WCC is not the tool to achieve that - because it incentivises unproductive, slow-growing broadleaves which will sequester carbon but only reach peak sequestration rates way beyond 2050. We therefore need another carbon tool to enable a wider mix of projects to be planted that can yield carbon credits - and in doing so, deliver a renewable product which locks away that carbon in timber.

Version 3.0 of WCC will hopefully provide part of the answer. Meanwhile, we will continue to explore if Verra ARR could potentially fill the WCC blackhole.



AUTHOR WINS CHANGING ATTITUDES AWARD AT CONFOR DINNER

The author of a book promoting the crucial role of timber in tackling climate change has won a leading industry award sponsored by Scottish Woodlands Ltd.

Paul Brannen was presented with the Changing Attitudes Awards at the Confor Awards Dinner, for *Timber!. How wood can help save the world from climate breakdown.*

He is the 5th winner of the award, for "an individual, business or organisation promoting the forestry and wood sector in a positive, impactful way - through personal engagement, campaigning, or communication".

Ian Robinson, Managing Director of Scottish Woodlands Ltd, presented the award to Mr Brannen, a former Labour Member of the European Parliament, now Director of Public Affairs for European woodworking and sawmilling bodies CEI-Bois and EOS.

Judges said the book was "a well-researched, well-structured argument for the greater use of timber, and why this means far more wood-producing forests must be planted. It recognises the importance of communicating effectively with a range of

interest groups; politicians, environmentalists, and the housing and construction sector. As a former MEP, Paul understands the need for political buy-in and is making progress in his efforts to get the new Government to recognise the significance of embodied carbon in the built environment."

After receiving the award, Mr Brannen said: "This prize is your prize. It should go to all the people I spoke to in writing this book, the places I visited and the things I read. I just brought together that collective, very good story and put it in a format for the general reader."

Ian Robinson said it was important that Mr Brannen's book had reached out far beyond the industry and talked to different audiences in a meaningful way.

"Forestry and wood is a people industry and we have to deal with a wide range of consultants, clients, customers and contractors - and ensure that the message is clear," he said.



Two of Scottish Woodlands' rising stars were shortlisted for different awards at the awards dinner, attended by well over 200 people in the Surgeon's Quarter, Edinburgh.

Julia Henriksson, Utilities Contract and Environmental Manager, based in Perth, was a finalist for the Future Leader Award, sponsored by James Jones & Sons. She was described as a "creative, talented and forward-thinking young leader", especially how she links forest management, utilities work and environmental considerations in a strategic, innovative way.

In a strong shortlist, the award was presented to **Cora Pfarre**, Head Forester at Maydencroft Ltd. **Byron Braithwaite**, Assistant Regional Manager in Scottish Woodlands' Dumfries office, was shortlisted for a new award, for Building Industry Resilience - for his Nuffield Farming Scholarship work on *Creating Forests That Thrive in a Changing Climate: Drought and Fire Resilience*. Judges noted that his research, conducted outside his day job, is "extensive and crucial to the future resilience of the forestry and wood industry".

In another strong list of finalists, the award was presented to the Institute of Chartered Foresters' Emerging Leader Programme.



Julia Henriksson of Scottish Woodlands Ltd (2nd right) with fellow finalists in the Future Leader category (L-R): Robbie MacDonald, Scotwood Macdonald; Bryony Hewetson Ward, Forestry and Land Scotland; Cora Pfarre, Maydencroft Ltd, the award winner. Also pictured (far right) is David Leslie, Joint Managing Director of James Jones & Sons Ltd, the award sponsor



Byron Braithwaite (2nd left) of Scottish Woodlands Ltd with fellow finalists in the Building Industry Resilience category. Also pictured are: fellow finalists Toby Parkes (left), of Rhizocore Technologies; Louise Simpson, Executive Director of the Institute of Chartered Foresters (winner for its Emerging Leader Programme); and Ben Goh and Andrew Henry of Maelor Forest Nurseries (either side of Louise). Also pictured are award presenters Richard Stanford, CEO, Forestry Commission, right, and Kevin Quinlan, CEO, Forestry & Land Scotland, 2nd right)

Ian Robinson said: "Scottish Woodlands was delighted to sponsor the Changing Attitudes Award for the 5th time - and to see another really worthy winner. We're also pleased to be part of a really successful event which is going from strength to strength and is a significant date on the forestry calendar."

"I'm also personally delighted that two of our many rising stars, Julia and Byron, were shortlisted. Although they didn't win on this occasion, they are doing great work and have brilliant careers ahead of them."

Mairi Gougeon, Cabinet Secretary for Rural Affairs, spoke at the dinner, and reaffirmed the Scottish Government's strong support for the industry, including the vital importance of productive planting to support both the economy and climate change ambitions.

Opportunities for Woodland Creation

It was with little sadness or regret from a business perspective that we bade farewell to 2024. Markets were subdued following the announcement of cuts to the Forestry Grant Scheme pot and we awaited the inevitable Labour election victory and Budget that would follow.

In reality, the grant reductions, whilst significant in financial terms, had little impact. It was business as usual for woodland creation with the grant funding pot only being reduced to the levels granted in previous years (in 2022/23, only 43% of the annual target was met). It has been reported that no eligible schemes were turned down due to a shortfall of funding and it is clear there is sufficient grant funding to cover the levels we have been achieving on average since 2017. It was also recently announced by Confor that the Cabinet Secretary has secured an additional £8 million of funding for the sector for 2025/26. This increase has been driven in part by the record number of hectares delivered in 2023/24.

However, it is clear that these grant figures will not allow us to achieve the Government's strong targets of planting 18,000 hectares of woodlands annually in Scotland.

The reality of the Labour Budget was less impactful than it could have been for the forestry sector. Whilst the first changes to forestry taxation since 1988 were introduced (bringing forestry into Inheritance Tax with an effective 20% Inheritance Tax on forest assets with a value above £1million coming into effect in 2026), Capital Gains on timber and exemptions on taxation of timber sales remain unaffected.

Surely then, 2025 is to be a bumper year of renewed interest in forestry. The asset value has a positive correlation with inflation, making it a good hedge and provides as good an Inheritance Tax shelter as is available in the UK. The 5% biological growth per annum occurs regardless of socio-economic factors and the ability to 'store timber at stump' until markets are optimal is also unique to the asset. Furthermore, timber demand is spiking dramatically, with one study suggesting global demand is set to quadruple by 2060 (driven by changing demographics in developing economies and the decarbonisation of construction) meaning that owners of timber producing woodland can be assured of future value.

Added to these attractions, the 2025 Savills Market Report signposts softening values since 2022, meaning that we are seeing a strong buyer's market with many opportunities for new woodland creation going unrealised.

Scotland

Scotland remains the bastion of new woodland creation. It leads the UK in timber production and in the use of timber frame construction. Scotland is targeted with producing 18,000ha of the recently revised 37,000ha target across the UK.

Despite these punchy ambitions, applications have faced a number of setbacks on a local level with the UK's spruce heartland in Southern Scotland facing the dual challenge of 'cumulative impact' assessments and the proposed Galloway National Park failing to mention the word timber in its initial drafting - despite its importance in UK wide timber provision.

There is strong will in Scotland to maintain the high number of hectares delivered and there is the land to achieve this without competing with agriculture.

Afforestation in Scotland remains an excellent investment for existing landowners and new investors alike.

England

The recent heartening announcement of a successful application for a 290-hectare timber producing woodland creation in County Durham couldn't be more timely. The success demonstrates that projects of this scope are achievable and an extremely attractive prospect with England's raft of grant support through the England Woodland Creation Offer (EWCO).

England harbours significant untapped potential for woodland creation opportunity. It is crucial that the productive conifer element of new planting increases exponentially to meet demand for timber and government net zero targets. But less than 10% of England's c.4,550 hectares of woodland creation applications in 2023/24 were produced with timber supply as a future objective, and this must improve.

With the announcement of future successes, it is hopeful that investors, regulators and the public can take confidence in the development of more commercially-focussed woodland creation with the multi-faceted benefits that they bring.

Investors in England can expect hefty grant support and a process-driven application but potentially one that is slightly more prolonged due to the way EWCO is set up and being a scheme still in its infancy.

On the Farm

It is well worth noting that just under half of the new woodland creation area per annum is made up of an aggregate of schemes of 20 hectares or less.

Savvy estate owners and farmers alike will look to diversify their income streams and add value to poorer areas of their holdings where stock rearing is challenging or unfruitful. Trees on the farm can also provide shelter and shade and improve the health of livestock.

Scottish Woodlands estimates that just 5% of the grade 4 and poorer land is required to meet government planting targets by 2050. Within land holdings, it would be hoped that practices (with the help of trees) could become 5%+ more efficient in this time, while avoiding net loss of food production.

Carbon

Much has been made of the additional revenue stream that the Woodland Carbon Code can provide for new woodland creation. Regulators are hopeful that carbon can, in time, bridge the funding gap required to fund the future targets by offering the opportunity to limit the level of grant income and make schemes more additional.

Carbon requires careful consideration on any scheme that is being taken forward and should always be part of the consideration, if not the main driver. Care is required to ensure that schemes proposed can be implemented and will produce the outputs expected in the long term. Factors like future maintenance and auditing costs require significant scrutiny.

I hope that 2025 will offer a chance for new investment into the sector, a gathering of impetus in England and an opportunity for landowners to evaluate which parts of their holding may be invested in for future return and upvaluing.



Dan Wilson
Forest Investment Manager

E: Dan.wilson@scottishwoodlands.co.uk
T: 01835 823 353 | M: 07425 758 146





ERIN JOINS GRUELLING WEST HIGHLAND WAY RELAY CHALLENGE

Erin Stoll from Scottish Woodlands has taken part in a gruelling relay running challenge along the full length of the West Highland Way to raise money for Scottish Mountain Rescue.

The company's Peatland Project Manager ran a double leg of the relay - battling snow and ice in the later stages - to help Clyde Mountaineering Club complete the challenge in just over 19 hours.

The 155km (96-mile) route from Milngavie to Fort William reaches **elevations of more than 1800 feet and has a total elevation gain of 10,000ft.** It normally takes walkers around 5 days to complete.

The club set out to raise £2000 to support the lifesaving work of volunteer mountain rescue teams working across Scotland - but have already smashed their target and raised more than £3000.

Erin said: "Like many members of Scottish Woodlands staff, I spend lots of time in remote and mountainous areas for both work and leisure time - so I'm very thankful for the work that the Scottish Mountain Rescue teams do in responding to emergencies on the hills.

"They have faced an increasing number of callouts in recent years due to the growing popularity of hillwalking and outdoor activities. In 2023 alone, Scottish Mountain Rescue teams across the country attended more than 500 incidents."

Erin was scheduled to run two sections of the route, from the Drovers' Inn (top of Loch Lomond) to Crainlarich and the Lagangarbh hut to Kinlochleven but ended up doing both those - and the leg from Crainlarich to Kirkton as a fellow club member was unwell and had to be pushed back to later in the challenge. Her second section included the famous Devil's Staircase in Glencoe.

"Doing **three** legs was a real challenge, especially with snow and ice later on - but also very satisfying," said Erin, who has been running in the hills for four years.

She was accompanied on both legs by a fellow club member - at least two runners complete every section to ensure their safety.

"There is a lot of running up steep paths and there was plenty of ice and snow around," said Erin. "The main concern beforehand was definitely the weather. Between early January snow and Storm Eowyn, we were lucky with our weather window. In the end, we did need to adjust the planned route to avoid windblown trees, and we also encountered some ice and snow in the later sections but thankfully we were well-prepared with microspikes!

"The main challenge we faced was quite unexpected, as two of our support vehicles required mechanical attention before the day was over."



Erin has not been put off by the tough challenge and said Clyde Mountaineering Club is already thinking about its next charity fundraiser.

Mark Waddoups, lead organiser of the challenge, said: "We caught a few weird looks from people on a Saturday night out as we went down the high street in Fort William at the end!

"This was amazing work from everyone - it was a huge logistical and physical challenge, and we couldn't have asked for a better day or better people.

"We hit our target the night before we started, which was excellent timing. We're very happy to be supporting Scottish Mountain Rescue and thanks everyone for a great day."



If you would like to support the fundraising effort, please scan the QR code:



FLINTSHIRE WOODLANDS:

Adapting commercial forestry to new environmental standards

Overview

Flintshire Woodlands Ltd was engaged to oversee harvesting operations and plan the next rotation for a 450-hectare upland Sitka Spruce plantation near Brecon, South Wales. The site required careful consideration of new UK Woodland Assurance Standard (UKWAS) requirements while maintaining its commercial timber production value.

Challenge

The key challenges included:

- Implementing new UKWAS species diversity requirements without compromising the commercial viability of the site;
- Planning on a complex upland site with varying soil conditions;
- Balancing the creation of a timber-producing forest with the enhancement of biodiversity;
- Coordinating multiple site contractors while maintaining strict quality control.

Solution

Flintshire Woodlands Ltd developed a comprehensive approach:

- Worked with experienced contractors Baden Powell Forestry and Pontrilas Timber Ltd to conduct harvesting operations;
- Ran a series of pre-commencement, active site and pre-completion checks to ensure smooth running of harvesting operations.
- Created a revised management plan incorporating species diversification based on productive capability of site.
- Identified areas better suited to broadleaf species and to specific conifer species;
- Established clear communication channels between all parties to address any issues and challenges in a proactive way.



Results

The project delivered significant benefits:

- Successful completion of harvesting operations within the required timescale;
- Development of a future-proof management plan that satisfies new UKWAS requirements;
- Enhanced biodiversity through targeted species selection based on soil conditions;
- Improved overall woodland resilience while maintaining commercial timber production;
- Efficient contractor management with minimal operational issues.



"This harvesting operation, working with Baden Powell Forestry and Pontrilas Timber Ltd, ran smoothly and very well. Potential issues have been identified and dealt with before they become problematic which has been helped by good communication. Work has been completed safely and efficiently in the required timescale."



Alastair Squire
Senior Harvesting and Forest Manager,
Flintshire Woodlands

E: alastair.squire@scottishwoodlands.co.uk
T: 01691 770 261 | M: 07795 546 849





DROUGHT & FIRE RESILIENCE



Overview

Byron Braithwaite of Scottish Woodlands Ltd completed a Nuffield Farming Scholarship on *Creating Forests That Thrive in a Changing Climate: Drought and Fire Resilience*.

His research, conducted outside his day job as Assistant Regional Manager (South West Scotland), was extensive and could be crucial to the future resilience of the forestry and wood industry.

He investigated the likely effects of drought and fire on the UK forest industry by observing forests in drier climates - and identified techniques and practical measures to increase the resilience of young trees at the establishment phase. The scholarship involved extensive travel, including Canada, France, Spain and New Zealand, to evaluate climate change risks to forestry in different climates, including the United Kingdom.

The challenge

New woodland creation and forest restructuring that is taking place now, will be affected by climate change in the 2050s and 2060s with the effects of drought and wildfire being more pronounced at this time. Byron wants to educate workers in the forest industry and the public to prepare for these changes - and to add resilience by future-proofing woodland creation and forest restructuring with a longer-term approach.



The solution

Byron's research examines key areas for building resilience in UK forestry practices in the face of climate change. It focuses on drought tolerance and fire management strategies, an area where there is a limited amount of research currently underway. His central message is that action to create drought and fire-resilient forests must start immediately.

Byron's research identified solutions that could significantly improve survival rates of new planting in drought conditions - including packaging, cold dispatch, use of additives in cell-grown stock, careful site and genotype analysis and planting during optimal periods.

His ambition is to enhance public awareness of fire safety messaging, by supporting educational initiatives targeting children, and creating programmes for outdoor enthusiasts, including the use of social media and digital channels. Engagement with all rural workers will also be critical to ensure safe working during periods of higher fire risk - because, as his research notes, wildfire is almost always started by humans.

What next?

Byron has reported his findings to a variety of audiences, including a Nuffield Conference in Belfast (watch his presentation [here](#)), while articles in *Forestry Journal* and *The Scottish Farmer* have targeted a wider variety of organisations to get them engaged in this field. He has also had multiple discussions with industry colleagues and clients.

Implementation is still in its early days, but Byron recognises the need to maintain momentum, while understanding that engagement with climate change preparedness can take time. To this end, Byron has begun engagement with FISA 803 to encourage a focus on prevention. Engagement with Future Trees Trust and the Conifer Breeding Cooperative is also under way.

Finally, Nuffield offered a fantastic opportunity to engage with farmers and land managers of all kinds to build understanding and a sense of shared responsibility for sustainable land use. Byron is grateful to be one of the first forestry focused projects within Nuffield and hopes that his continued engagement with this valuable organisation will foster opportunities for collaboration with farmers, and opportunities to share his passion for trees and forests.



Byron Braithwaite
Regional Manager South-West

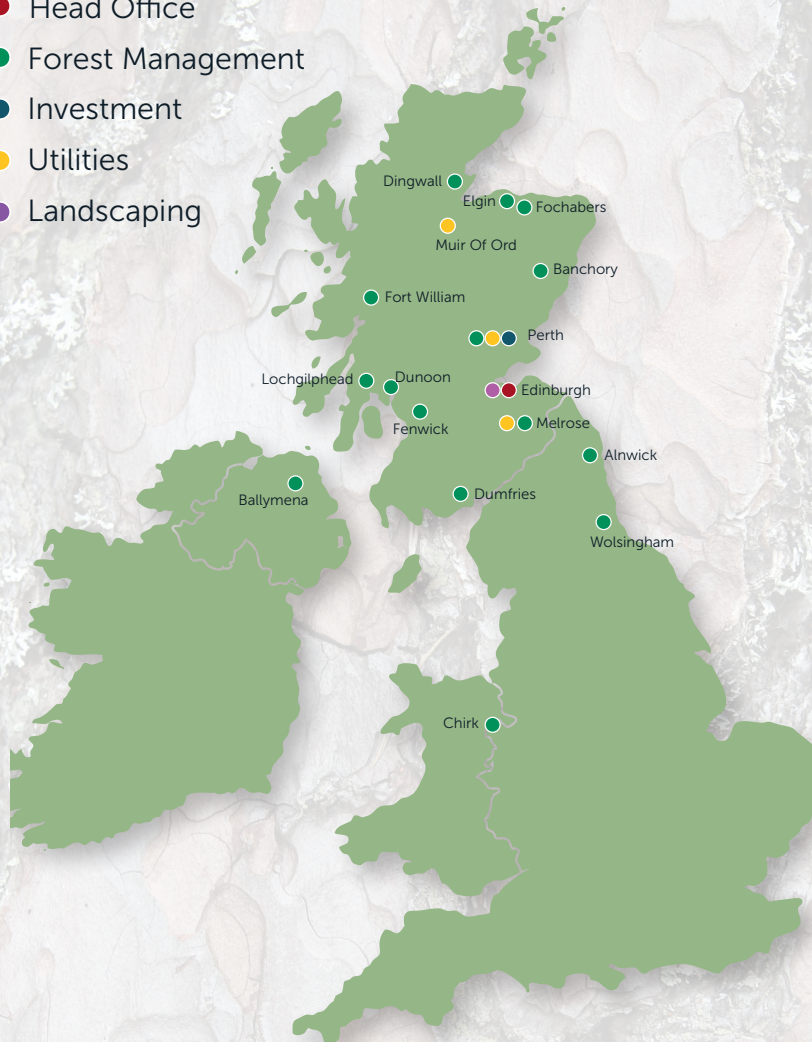
E: byron.braithwaite@scottishwoodlands.co.uk
T: 01556 502 754 | M: 07425 357 764



OFFICE LOCATIONS

Departments / Services:

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



www.scottishwoodlands.co.uk/contact

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

