



Woodlands' View

SCOTTISH WOODLANDS NEWSLETTER | Summer 2026

..... Atmospheric
shot wins annual
photography prize

Also In This Edition

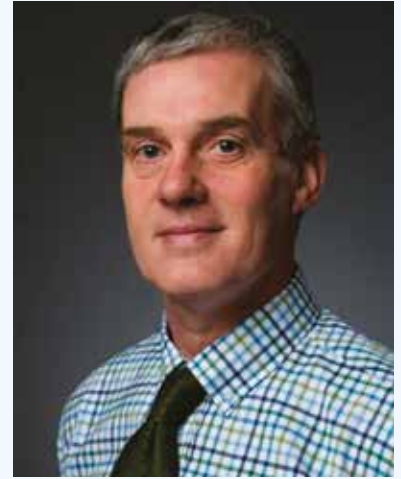
- Mapping Scottish Peatlands •
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Scottish Woodlands Photography Competition – WINNER – Eoghan Anderson

Growing a Sustainable Future



WELCOME TO OUR SUMMER NEWSLETTER 2026



Ian Robinson, Managing Director

The SWL group of companies (Scottish Woodlands, RTS Forestry and Flintshire Woodlands) will be out in force again at agricultural shows in summer 2026. We hope to see you at the two biggest events on the rural calendar - the Royal Highland Show and Royal Welsh Show, - as well as NSA ScotSheep, the Turriff Show, Black Isle Show and Moy Game Fair.

As a group, we are planting more than one-third of all new woodland in Scotland, and are happy to discuss all things forestry and wood - both the opportunities and the challenges.

In the last planting season (2024/25), the group planted 2,871 hectares (ha) of new woodland creation (NWC) and replanted a further 2,226 ha. NWC was down 5% from the previous year, but replanting was up 27%. Prospects for 2025/26 look to be following a similar trend, with NWC down and replanting up.

Timber markets remain challenging, but we are working through this with long-standing timber processing customers while developing relationships with new clients.

RTS Forestry, based in Perthshire, and Flintshire Woodlands, which serves a large geographical area from an office in North Wales, continue to develop, helping to diversify our business into areas such as wood fuel production and infrastructure project work.

We continue to "Grow our Own" managers via our graduate development programme, now entering its 10th year - and plan to recruit four more graduates this year.

If you're thinking about carrying out any forestry operations, 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.



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Members of Scottish Woodlands forestry teams, together with colleagues from RTS, attended a

Chainsaw Operations for Supervisors and Managers Training Course,

reinforcing our ongoing commitment to safe working practices and high industry standards.

The course ran over two days with a morning focussed on the theoretical aspects supported by one and a half days of on-site, practical elements.

The course was specifically designed to support our Forestry Works Managers who are responsible for planning, coordinating, and supervising chainsaw operations. Providing them with the knowledge and skills required to effectively oversee chainsaw operations in a range of forestry environments, ensuring safety, compliance with regulations and high operational and environmental standards.

The training focused on the application of statutory requirements and the implementation of effective control measures in high-risk environments.

Core technical elements included:

- Interpretation and application of relevant legislation, including the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 (HSWA), Provision and Use of Work Equipment Regulations 1998 (PUWER)
- Development and implementation of site-specific risk assessments and method statements (RAMS)
- Hazard identification relating to chainsaw use, including falling objects, kickback, felling operations, and environmental factors
- Establishment and monitoring of exclusion zones and safe working distances
- Inspection of equipment and verification of operator competence and certification
- Incident reporting procedures and near-miss analysis

The training emphasised the supervisor's role in ensuring that all operations are planned and conducted within a clearly defined and controlled framework.

The knowledge gained from the course directly supports the safe planning and execution of forestry activities, including felling, processing, and site clearance.

Forestry Works Managers are now better equipped to:

- Evaluate dynamic site conditions such as terrain, weather, and tree characteristics
- Implement control measures to mitigate identified risks
- Monitor compliance with safe working procedures in real time
- Coordinate teams to ensure clear communication and task allocation
- Intervene effectively where unsafe practices are observed

This level of oversight is critical in reducing the likelihood of incidents and maintaining operational efficiency.

Andrew Tuft, Harvesting & Marketing Director for Scottish Woodlands said, *"Using a chainsaw remains a high-risk activity within the forestry sector, requiring highly skilled and competent operators to undertake often challenging and complex tasks. It is therefore important that our staff understand their responsibilities when managing chainsaw activities, ensuring that operations are effectively planned, risk is minimised and operational standards are monitored correctly. As Forestry Works Managers and Supervisors managing forest operations, our staff value and respect the technical expertise of chainsaw operators, and this training recognises that respect. It enables our staff to work closer and more effectively with contractors and chainsaw operators, openly discussing tasks and site-specific risks, agreeing effective controls, and monitoring work practices throughout the process."*

The course has been developed by Focus on Forestry First with the scope approved by the FISA FWM Working Group and forms part of both the FISA and Scottish Woodlands Forestry Works Managers Competency Framework and CPD. Feedback from the event has been very positive with the attendees appreciating the knowledge and expertise that the training team had. The ability to see first-hand the different types of felling cuts and discuss what situations these might be appropriate, giving everyone a broader insight into the associated techniques.

Morven Wilson, Senior Compliance Manager for Scottish Woodlands said, *"We had two fantastic days and would like to say a huge thank you to Focus on Forestry First and especially Iwan Lloyd-Williams and Gethin Hughes for providing knowledgeable and experienced training to our staff."*

Additional courses are being arranged to ensure all staff who have responsibilities for managing chainsaw operations receive this training.

MARIE CURIE IS SWL'S CHARITY FOR 2026

Scottish Woodlands Ltd has chosen Marie Curie as its nominated charity for 2026 - and urged staff members to engage in a wide variety of fundraising events.



Marie Curie provides care and support for people living with any terminal illness across the UK, with nurses working in people's homes and hospices offering specialist care. The charity also offers emotional support, provides practical information, and matches people with trained volunteers.

Ian Robinson, Managing Director of Scottish Woodlands, said: "We decided to support Marie Curie this year as it is a large, well-known charity which touches so many families' lives. We know our staff love a good fundraiser, so we hope they will pull out all the stops to support such a great charity and its range of brilliant work."

Mr Robinson added: "We're looking forward to a real variety of fundraising events, with nothing too small or too large! You can take on an individual challenge or team up with colleagues, friends or family for a group challenge."

Christine Connor, Corporate Partnerships Manager Scotland for Marie Curie, said: "Marie Curie is delighted and very grateful that Scottish Woodlands has chosen us as its charity for 2026. We are really excited to be working closely with the company."

"Our vision is to provide a better end of life for everybody, and we could not provide all our services as a charity free of charge, without the support of valued partners such as Scottish Woodlands."

STAFF CHALLENGE

Forestry Director Dessy Henry is pulling on his Speedos to complete a marathon swimming challenge for Scottish Woodlands' chosen charity.



Dessy, who splits his working time between Scotland and Northern Ireland, will swim the distance of the Belfast-Cairnryan ferry between the two countries to raise money for Marie Curie Cancer Care. That's a mammoth 50 miles (or 80km), but rather than dodging jellyfish or cargo ships between the two ports, he is taking on the challenge in a swimming pool.

To complete the challenge by the end of September, Dessy will have to swim an astonishing 3,200 lengths of a normal 25-metre pool.

He explained: "I started in January and I have already covered 30km, so I'm very hopeful of hitting the target, but it is a very long distance to cover!"

"I travel a lot for my work on the ferry between Belfast and Cairnryan, in the south-west of Scotland, so it seemed like a good idea to choose that as a distance."

"I've already had amazing support from colleagues, although some of them have joked that I will have gills by September! Seriously, I'd love to raise a lot of money, so anyone who hasn't sponsored me, please do so if you can."

If you would like to support Dessy, please do so via this Just Giving link:
<https://www.justgiving.com/page/scottish-woodlands-1?newPage=true>





Marathon kayaking challenge completed!

THREE intrepid Scottish Woodlands staff have completed a mammoth kayaking challenge to raise thousands of pounds for Marie Curie.

David Robertson, Jamie Reith and Andy Maclachlan paddled 92km (57 miles) along the Great Glen Canoe Trail in just two and a half days - a challenge normally expected to take up to 5 days.

The trail connects the Atlantic Ocean to the North Sea via the Caledonian Canal, with open water sections including Loch Lochy, Loch Oich and Loch Ness.

In completing the challenge, they have already raised almost £5000 for Scottish Woodlands' chosen charity, Marie Curie - and you can still give by scanning the QR code:



David Robertson, Director of Investment and Business Development at Scottish Woodlands, said: *"It's been tough, but hugely rewarding and a lot of fun along the way - and to raise such a large sum for Marie Curie makes it all worthwhile."*

The three colleagues, all part of the company's Business Development team, came up with the idea during a regular team meeting.

"It all sounds great when you say it out loud in a meeting, but when you're lugging your kayak around a lock, or paddling against a stiff wind in the rain, it's a very different experience!" said Mr Robertson. "But seeing the sponsor money keep coming in was great motivation, so thanks so much for everyone's support."

"We were pretty lucky in general with the weather, apart from a tough stretch on day 2 when the wind was against us. And as team-building experiences go, it's hard to beat, and we're quite sad to be back on dry land."

Ian Robinson, Managing Director of Scottish Woodlands, said: *"We're very proud of Dave, Jamie and Andy; it's a brilliant effort and all I can say is 'Much rather them than me!'"*

"We don't expect everyone to do something so extreme, but we're encouraging all our staff to do their bit for Marie Curie this year as it's a brilliant charity that touches so many people."

You can look back on the challenge with video posts on David Robertson's LinkedIn page here:





New video showcases expertise of Projects Team

A new video showcases the expertise of the Scottish Woodlands' projects team in clearing trees from large wind farm sites.

The film focuses on Windy Standard 3 in Dumfries & Galloway, where Scottish Woodlands is clearing almost 300 hectares of trees, and marketing around 90,000 tonnes of timber.

The clearance is being carried out to allow the construction of 20 new turbines by Fred Olsen Renewables at one of the longest-established wind farms in Scotland. Phase 3 will have 87.6 Megawatts of capacity, and produce energy for 130,000 homes annually.

Matt Parr, General Manager, Projects, for Scottish Woodlands, says in the video: *"We started discussing the project in 2024 to ensure important strategic planning dates were met to ensure the smooth running of the project. Work started in May 2025, and we anticipate it will take about 18 months."*

"The relationship with Fred Olsen has been fantastic. On a project of this size, problems are always going to occur, so a strong bond and trusting relationship means these can be ironed out, and corrected very easily on site."

Eirik Brandsdal, Project Director for Fred Olsen Renewables, says: *"Establishing a close collaboration with Scottish Woodlands has been key to maintaining the progress and sorting out challenges when they arise. It's been working very well."*

"You communicate in a good way when things arise, so we can make the right decisions and I feel that's been well done by the project team in Scottish Woodlands."

Anthony Wrightson, Assistant Projects Manager at Scottish Woodlands, explains: *"Large projects like this are complex, so the more cohesion you have with the people you work with, the smoother you can have a project like this run throughout."*

Andrew Tuft, Harvesting and Marketing Director for Scottish Woodlands, says: *"I work very closely with the projects team on a project like this, dealing with the marketing of the timber that comes off the site."*



"The first task we had was to look at the vast area of forest that had to be felled - to assess volumes and look at crop quality. We're assessing there will be about 90,000 tonnes of timber by the time we have completed our operations here."

"The main species is Sitka spruce, which fits very well with the UK timber processing industry. On average, the markets we are dealing with here are within a 40-mile radius, so relatively low miles to market."

About 45% of the timber from Windy Standard 3 will go into construction markets, for new housing and square-edged fencing. Around 20% will be used for pallet wood, and 20% to produce high-quality magazine paper and other paper products. The final 15% will be used for wood briquettes and wood pellets.

Most of the cleared area will be replanted. Where this is impossible due to the wind turbines, compensatory planting will be carried out elsewhere.

Mr Tuft concludes the video by saying: *"It's really good to see a project like this come together and be delivered to schedule to very high standard."*

Mr Parr says: *"There are very few companies which have the skills and ability to deliver this type of project, due to the immense coordination and intricate detail of the documentation. Scottish Woodlands is exemplary in these respects."*

Watch the video here:



Contact the Projects Team by calling 01738 625128, or 07778 469440, email Matt Parr on matt.parr@scottishwoodlands.co.uk or go to the website: www.scottishwoodlands.co.uk





UNRAVELLING THE PROBLEM: MAPPING HAGS, BARE PEAT AND EROSION IN COMPLEX PEATLAND ENVIRONMENTS

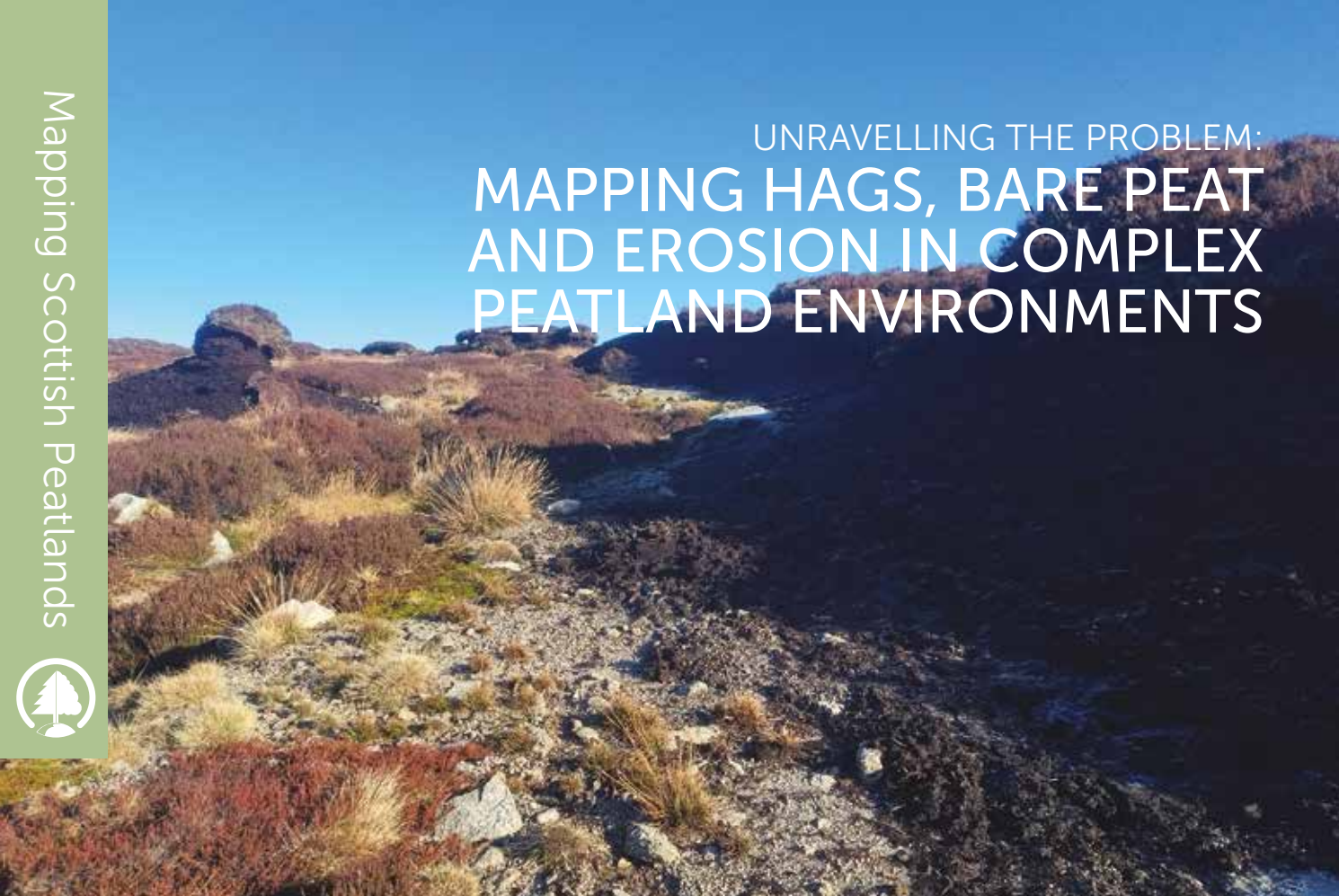


Image 1: degraded peatland with hags, bare peat and mineral pans

By their nature, upland blanket bogs can be vast, complex and inaccessible systems. Some Scottish peatlands stretch over hundreds of hectares of remote, undulating terrain and interconnected with rivers, lochs and other water bodies. Mapping these complex systems is essential in designing effective restoration plans for degraded and damaged areas and preparing monitoring regimes for restored sites. Features of peatland erosion such as hags, gullies, artificial drains and bare peat pans must be located, characterised and measured for a restoration '*prescription*' to be developed, with different restoration techniques being more or less appropriate for different challenges. However, severely degraded sites with numerous and complex features can be extremely difficult to accurately map. Building from experience at Glen Dye Moor, manually mapping degraded peatlands can be extremely time-consuming and often not fully accurate depending on quality of imagery and overlying vegetation cover.

To approach this challenge from a different angle, SWL have developed a different approach to baseline mapping of peatland erosive features ahead of refinement and ground truthing.

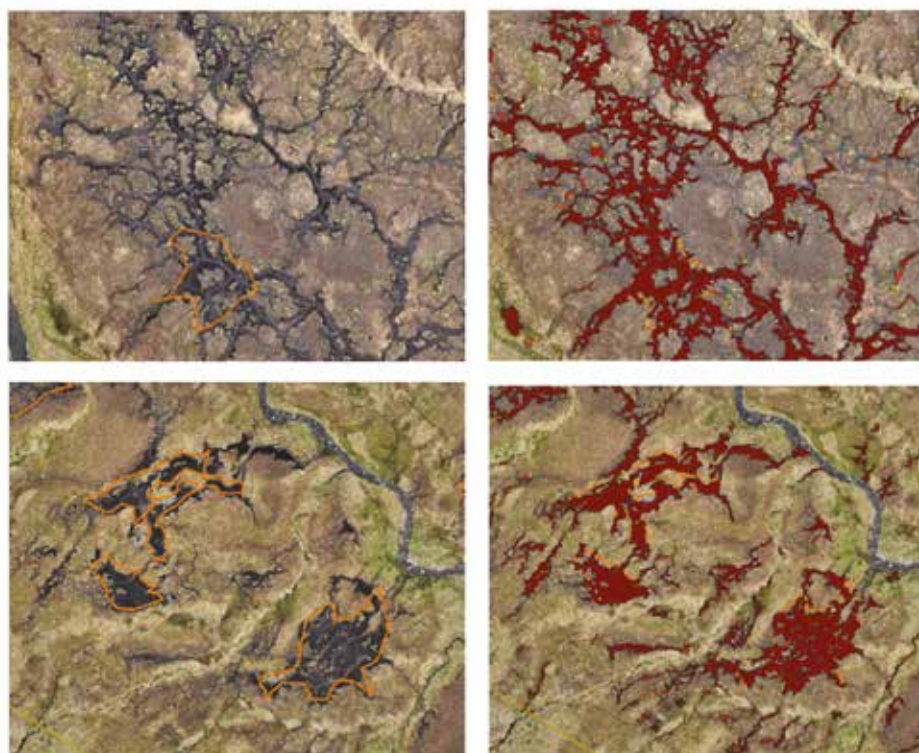
Using high resolution drone imagery (less than 20 cm per pixel), a classification tool was developed for bare peat and eroded areas enabling them to be more efficiently mapped ahead of ground-truthing.

A site in the Northwest Highlands with extensive bare peat and complex 'dendritic' gullying was our first real-life trial. Hags, gullies and peat pans tend to appear darker than the surrounding vegetation, and their uneven surfaces can often be identified from the imagery. The classification tool uses height and colour information from drone imagery to generate threshold value above which areas are categorised as potential bare peat.

Once the initial computer mapping was complete, the results were checked by hand. A grid was laid over the map to help systematically review areas flagged as potentially bare peat. Any areas that weren't suitable for restoration, such as thin or non-peat soils, hill tracks, and natural streams, were then removed from this new file. Unlike mapping manually from scratch, this tool has allowed us to refine the area based on a maximal approach and removing extra features. Going forward, we hope that this approach can assist in reducing the impact of under-mapping erosive features when designing restoration plans.



As this tool is developed, ground-truthing the areas identified by the mapping tool is still very important in confirming the features are present and planning the best intervention methods for restoration. The images below present some comparisons between the photographs captured during a site visit earlier this year and the areas highlighted by the mapping tool (pink outline).



This process makes it much easier to measure and quantify work needed in restoration plans and highlight areas most in need of more intense intervention, allowing field teams to focus their time on areas needing most insight, rather than covering the whole site.

Image 2: Example of 'dendritic' gullies and bare peat areas classified using the mapping tool.



Image 3: Side by side comparison of mapped feature (pink outlines) with ground-truthed photograph.

Beyond restoration planning, this mapping approach also has potential for monitoring recovery at restored peatland sites. Under the Peatland Code, areas that were previously bare peat should gradually become rewetted and revegetated over time. By returning to the same sites and re-applying the mapping tool using new, current drone imagery, we can track how bare peat extent changes year on year providing a repeatable way to monitor restoration success. This kind of evidence is helpful in demonstrating the long-term benefits of peatland restoration for carbon storage, biodiversity and water quality.



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ATMOSPHERIC SHOT WINS ANNUAL PHOTOGRAPHY PRIZE

Eoghan Anderson has won the annual Scottish Woodlands staff photography competition for a beautifully atmospheric shot of a forest in Mull.

His image of the new bridge at Glenforsa was selected from a range of excellent entries by professional photographer and videographer Phil Wilkinson.

Phil said the picture by Eoghan, a Senior Forest Manager based at Lochgilphead, had

"lovely light, and strong composition"

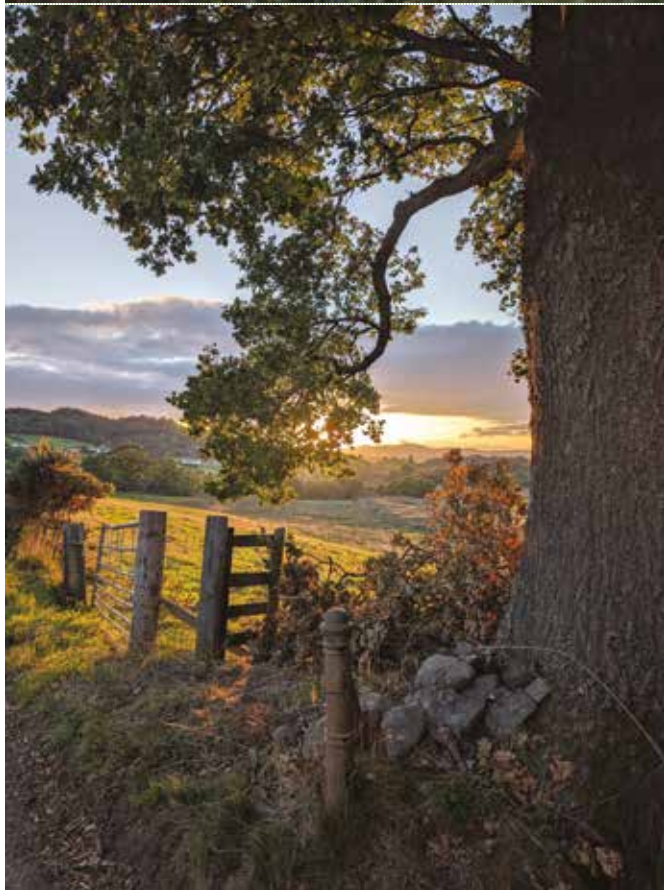
He added:

*"It really stood out to me.
The water leads you naturally
into a glorious landscape."*



The first runner-up was Jamie Reith, Business Development Manager based in Perth - for another atmospheric shot taken on the hill behind his house in Crieff, Perthshire.

Phil said: *"The lovely light streaming through the tree is well-captured - and placing the sun behind the trunk is good, allowing the camera to pick out the detail in the darker areas."*



In third place was Isla Campbell, a Forest Manager in Dingwall, for her picture at Moniack looking west towards Cabrich, west of Inverness in the Highlands.

Phil said: *"This picture has a strong composition and a nice balance of the sunset and detail in the shadows of the darker areas. The gate opens up the idea that you can walk into the image."*

"All the top three pictures were chosen for pretty much the same reasons - lovely light and fine composition."

David Robertson, Investment and Business Development Director with Scottish Woodlands Ltd, said: *"The photography competition is a chance to remind our staff of the beautiful places we work, and to celebrate those landscapes, the forestry industry and rural communities in general."*

"We had a great response again and I'm delighted to see such an excellent winner and runners-up. Many thanks to Phil for casting his expert eye over the entries, and giving great feedback."

Phil Wilkinson has worked on a number of Scottish Woodlands projects, taking photographs and producing high-quality videos across the UK - including films on the graduate development programme, a new planting site at Tippetty, and at the Royal Highland Show. He recently filmed a short video at the Confor awards dinner, including Jillian Kennedy of Scottish Woodlands, who won the Future Forestry Leader award.

Phil's photographs still regularly appear in national newspapers, and his website is here.





TIMBER MARKET UPDATE

It would be fair to say that it takes a determined mindset to keep focused on the embedded and demonstrable positives within the timber industry, from the domestic to the global market.

But given continual and worrying global events, and the subsequent fallout effects thereof, it can be hard to stay on course! In the words of the Dalai Lama "*Choose to be positive, it feels better*" is something we should all aim to do but sometimes, as Chief Brody in the film – *Jaws*, said, it can feel like "*We're gonna need a bigger boat.*"

Sustainability is the biggest global growth driver across Europe, Asia-Pacific and North America and with increasing environmental regulations, 'green-building' policies, decarbonisation targets are all leading to an increased use of timber for new house construction. Engineered wood products, such as CLT (Cross Laminated Timber) and GLT (Glue Laminated Timber) are opening new and exciting applications into multi-story commercial and residential building construction.

In the UK context we are seeing this positive trend of the increased use of timber in new house construction, with government targets and policies, along with industry initiatives, all paving the way for more use of timber within the construction sector. The 'Trust UK C16' campaign continues to promote the use of domestically produced C16 timber, with the

country's largest sawmillers (James Jones & Sons, BSW Timber and Glennon Brothers) and leading construction industry bodies coming together to raise awareness of the benefits and strategic importance of domestically grown and manufactured timber across the construction industry.

The UK Government's commitment to the 'Timber in Construction Policy Roadmap' in 2025 underpins the direction of travel for the increased use of timber in new house construction to meet government housing targets (1.5 million homes), contributing to achieving net zero by 2050, and stimulating economic growth of sustainable, and renewable industries. Yes, real concerns remain as to how far off the government will fall short of its own housing targets, due to consumer confidence in the marketplace, slow planning



approvals and skilled labour shortages but the building blocks (excuse the pun) are there for timber taking over from bricks and mortar, it will just take time.

Economic stressors aside, the shortage in skilled labour is expected to be a major restriction within the construction industry, with the Construction Industry Training Board (CITB) being clear that the workforce is not currently in place to meet such ambitious targets. It is estimated that between 2025 and 2029 the industry will need to recruit 240,000 additional workers, or 48,000 extra workers per year.

Recent events across the world remind us more than ever how reactive the global economy can be and how easy the flow of globally traded commodities can be disrupted. The UK remains the world's second largest net importer of timber, with 80% (value of £9 billion) of our requirements coming from imported timber. This is a statistic that resonates today more than ever. The recently published paper by Confor 'Timber: An Issue of National Security and Economic Resilience' highlights that as global demand for timber is rising and countries are shifting towards low-carbon construction materials and more sustainable building systems, the UK must ensure that it is growing and processing more of this strategic material at home. If not, the UK will become increasingly exposed to global supply disruptions, geopolitical tensions and rising costs.

The UK timber processing industry recognises the importance of domestically grown and processed timber and continues to put its best foot forward, making significant investment throughout the supply chain from timber harvesting and haulage to the wider timber processing sector. We only to look at the capital investments made throughout the sawmilling sector in recent years, to demonstrate the commitment and confidence invested into the UK timber industry, by those who know it best!

As with most things in life you start from the ground up and to see meaningful traction in increasing new house construction and an improving timber market, we need to the current Government's Planning Reform delivering faster, more predictable permissions coupled with greater pressure and incentives for Local Authorities to approve and deliver more homes. To stimulate demand lower interest rates are also needed to improve not only consumer confidence but housing developer confidence too. If those pieces of the jigsaw can come together the timber processing industry is more than ready to react.

Sometimes you do not need a bigger boat, you just need the tailwind.



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FORESTRY AT A CROSSROADS: DELIVERING TIMBER, CARBON AND CREDIBILITY IN A CHANGING UK LANDSCAPE

It is becoming increasingly difficult to ignore a simple truth; the UK is not growing enough timber. At a time when climate commitments are tightening, construction demand is rising, and global supply chains are under strain, this shortfall is no longer a niche sector issue. It is a strategic vulnerability.

Forestry now sits firmly at the intersection of national priorities. It underpins low carbon construction, contributes to energy security, supports rural economies, and plays a central role in nature recovery. Yet despite strong policy signals and growing investor interest, delivery on the ground remains inconsistent. The gap between ambition and implementation is where the real challenge lies.

Timber as a Strategic Resource

The UK imports around eighty percent of the wood products it consumes. That places us among the largest net importers globally, an uncomfortable position given projections that global timber demand could multiply significantly by mid-century.

If this level of dependency applied to food or energy, it would dominate political discourse. Timber has historically escaped that level of scrutiny, but that is beginning to change. There is growing recognition that timber is not simply a commodity. It is a strategic material with clear

implications for national resilience.

This shift is being reinforced by the role timber can play in decarbonising the built environment. Modern timber construction offers a dual benefit. It locks carbon into buildings while displacing more carbon-intensive materials such as steel and concrete. Productive forestry therefore becomes part of the climate solution, not in conflict with it.

However, recognising this in principle is not the same as delivering it in practice.

Policy Clarity and Investor Confidence

Forestry investment operates on timescales measured in decades. Decisions taken today will shape landscapes for half a century or more. That demands a high degree of confidence in policy, regulation, and process.

Over the past two years, that confidence has been tested. Inflationary pressures, weaker timber markets, and uncertainty around woodland creation approvals have all contributed to a more cautious investment environment. Concerns around regulatory consistency and long-term policy direction have been entirely justified.

Investors are generally comfortable with complexity. What they struggle with is unpredictability.

There are now more positive signals emerging. Across the UK, there is stronger alignment between governments and industry on the role of productive forestry. Strategies such as the Timber in Construction Roadmap and the development of national wood strategies indicate a more coordinated approach.

Encouragingly, there is also a growing acceptance that commercial forestry and environmental objectives are not mutually exclusive. Well-designed schemes can deliver timber, carbon, biodiversity, and social value simultaneously. The key is ensuring that schemes are practical, deliverable, and grounded in real world conditions.



Delivery Challenges and the Role of Regulation

Despite improved policy direction, delivery remains uneven. Woodland creation targets continue to be missed across much of the UK. The reasons are well understood: complex regulatory processes; inconsistent application of standards; and local opposition, often driven by misinformation.

The increasing use of judicial review to challenge afforestation projects highlights these tensions. While such challenges can introduce delay and uncertainty, they also serve an important function. They expose weaknesses in processes, and ensure that environmental standards are properly applied.

The response should not be to slow down woodland

creation. It should be to improve the quality and robustness of projects.

This means clearer regulatory frameworks, consistent decision making, and greater transparency in how schemes are assessed. It also requires the sector to communicate more effectively. Too often, the benefits of productive forestry are poorly articulated, leaving space for misunderstanding and opposition.

High quality projects that are well-designed, properly assessed, and openly justified will stand up to scrutiny. In the long term, that strengthens both public confidence and investor appetite.

Where the Opportunities Lie

Scotland remains the centre of gravity for UK forestry investment. The combination of suitable climate, established infrastructure, and deep operational expertise, provides a strong foundation for continued expansion. There is still significant scope for new woodland creation, particularly on lower grade grazing land. As agricultural systems evolve and pressures on livestock sectors increase, the opportunity to rebalance land use becomes more compelling.

Elsewhere, the picture is also shifting. Northern England is seeing growing interest in integrating forestry within

farming systems, while Wales is beginning to position itself more clearly through its timber industrial strategy.

For investors, the routes into the sector are well established. Existing forests offer immediate exposure to timber markets and cash flow through harvesting. Woodland creation offers longer term value, with the added ability to design schemes that integrate carbon and biodiversity from the outset.

Most portfolios will combine both, balancing income, growth, and environmental outcomes.

Natural Capital, Returns and Realism

Forestry has traditionally delivered returns through biological growth, timber yield, market pricing, and land appreciation. Over the long term, it has compared favourably with other real assets, offering both resilience and diversification.

More recently, natural capital has entered the equation. Carbon sequestration and biodiversity enhancement are increasingly part of investment models. However, these markets remain immature.

Supply is constrained, demand is inconsistent, and pricing lacks transparency. There is a clear risk of overpromising and

underdelivering if these revenue streams are not approached with caution.

The most robust investment strategies continue to be grounded in timber production. Carbon and biodiversity should be seen as complementary, not as substitutes for a fundamentally sound forestry model.

Credibility will be critical. Investors and land managers who focus on quality, transparency, and long-term stewardship will be better positioned than those chasing short term gains in evolving markets.

A Long-Term Business in a Short-Term World

Forestry does not align neatly with short term economic cycles. Trees grow at their own pace, regardless of quarterly reporting pressures. That can be a challenge, but it is also a strength.

In a world characterised by volatility and uncertainty, the long-term nature of forestry is increasingly attractive. Demand for timber is set to rise. Climate policy will continue to tighten. Natural capital markets will mature, albeit unevenly.

The UK has the land, the expertise, and the institutional framework to respond. What is needed now is consistent delivery, clear policy, and a continued focus on quality.

The opportunity is clear. The question is whether we can translate that opportunity into hectares on the ground, and do so in a way that stands up to both commercial and environmental scrutiny.

For those prepared to take a long term, disciplined approach, the case for forestry investment remains compelling.



David Robertson

Investment and Business Development Director

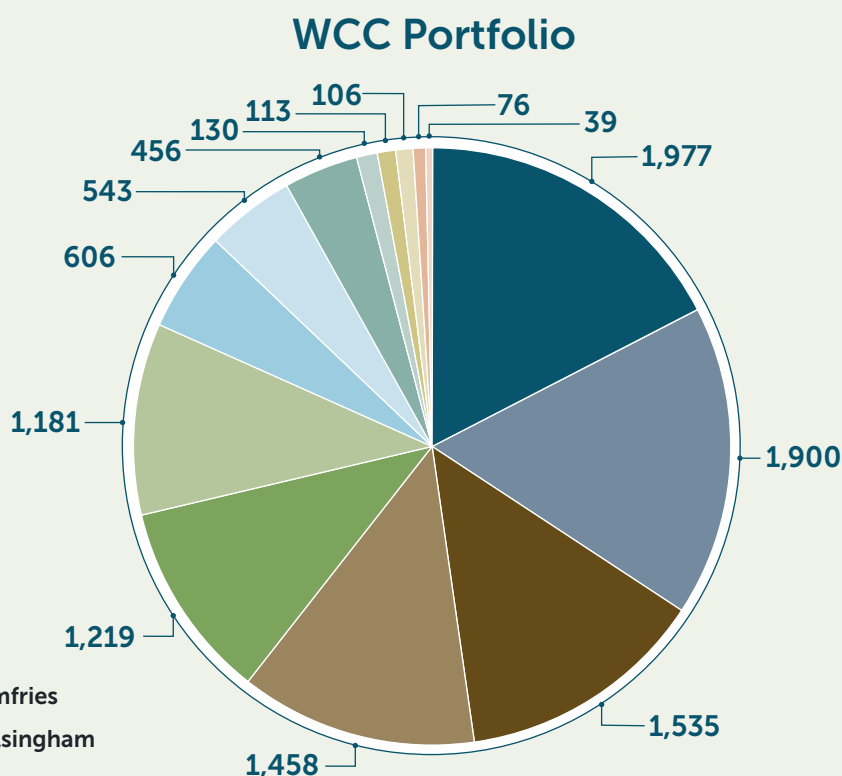
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A busy summer ahead for the Carbon team...

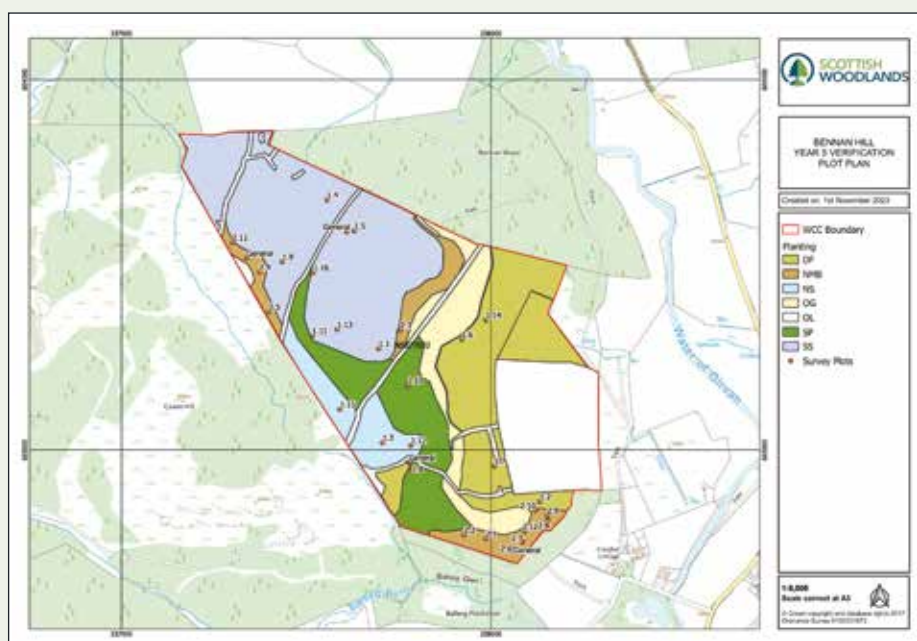
As the summer months approach, the Carbon team at Scottish Woodlands is preparing for the verification survey season. Scottish Woodlands' Carbon team is one of the largest project developers for the Woodland Carbon Code (WCC) with ~12,000 hectares in the carbon portfolio across the UK with projects in all devolved nations.



Projects validated under the WCC must undergo long term Monitoring, Reporting and Verification (MRV) to ensure the woodlands are growing as predicted and therefore sequestering carbon as predicted. At Year 5 and every 10 years thereafter, throughout the lifetime of the projects, the woodlands must be verified. Successful verification ensures any Pending Issuance Units (PIUs) are converted to verified Woodland Carbon Units (WCUs).

When the woodlands reach 5 years old, the first verification event must be carried out. This involves

completing an intensive site survey 12-18 months in advance of the Year 5 verification deadline. The site survey is conducted in accordance with the WCC survey protocol which requires a site to be split into compartments of similar species and stocking density (stratification). The stratification determines the number of sample plots that need to be surveyed to ensure a representative area of the site is surveyed. The number of plots can range from 12 to 40+ in some cases, depending on the variability of the woodland design and how it was planted.



At each plot, every tree must be identified, recording the species, height of each tree, any damaged or dead stems. The plot data is then collated into a monitoring report which determines whether the surveyed plots meet the planted stocking density. The survey results are verified by a third party auditing body which reviews the survey results and visits the site to survey 10% of the plots to validate the plot data.



The results are analysed for performance via a Red-Amber-Green colour-coded system. The traffic light metaphor enables visualisation of how the site is performing.



Red – The stocking density is less than 70% of planned, there is serious concern over the health and growth of the trees.

Amber – The stocking density surveyed was 70-90% of the planned stocking density, there is concern about the health of the trees or more than 30% of the trees were re-planted (beaten up) in the previous season before the survey. Remedial action is required to bring the site back up to standard.

Green – The trees across the whole site are healthy and stocking density is at least 90% of the planned density.

A successful (green) verification is therefore dependent on ensuring the new woodland is establishing, healthy and growing at the planned density and any remedial actions to remedy any under-establishment are captured early. Ongoing management and monitoring of new woodland creation projects is thus essential to ensure the carbon units predicted to be yielded by the project are on track for delivery.

At the current time, the verification protocol requires a boot-on-the-ground survey. However, the WCC is

currently trialling the use of drones as an alternative or supplementary methodology for collecting the required data for verification. It is hoped technical improvements will reduce the time required to conduct the survey and the future costs. In addition, any projects can choose to self-assess their woodlands from Year 15 onwards to save on third party auditing fees but with the caveat that no PIUs can be converted to WCUs. Conversion of carbon units requires a formal verification audit.



Scottish Woodlands' Carbon team has a large workstream of verification events underway for 2026-2027, with 40 projects in the auditing system, 41 projects to survey this summer and 33 projects to survey in 2027. Furthermore, the team has successfully verified 20 projects, with 19 achieving green status and 1 amber. The team has experience of stratifying and surveying a wide range of projects and is well-placed to advise on the Year 5 verification process.



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David Leslie of James Jones & Sons, presents the award to Jillian Kennedy, Scottish Woodlands Ltd

JILLIAN KENNEDY WINS FOREST INDUSTRY FUTURE LEADER AWARD

Jillian Kennedy, a Senior Forest Manager with Scottish Woodlands, has been named as forestry's most promising young leader in the premier industry awards.

Jillian won the Tom A Bruce Jones Memorial Award for the Future Leader in the Forest Industry at the annual Confor Awards Dinner In Edinburgh,

Judges praised Jillian's great leadership qualities, both within Scottish Woodlands and in her role as Chair of the Scottish Association of Young Farmers Clubs (SAYFC). The judges noted that she "worked tirelessly to foster greater understanding between farmers and foresters, and to build stronger rural communities".

The awards entry for Jillian stressed that she always goes the extra mile to develop her skills and knowledge. She has represented both Scottish Woodlands and the SAYFC on UK and European policy stages, including speaking at Confor's policy conference at Westminster, and playing an active part in the European Rural Parliament and the European Rural Youth Parliament last year.



There was more success for Scottish Woodlands, when the Forestry Operations New Entrants Programme won the Building Industry Resilience Award. Scottish Woodlands is the lead industry partner for the programme, which aims to attract young people and career changes into the forestry industry by offering an intensive five-week 'taster' course at the Scottish School of Forestry in Inverness. The second cohort has just started the course after a successful first year in 2025.

Ian Robinson, Managing Director of Scottish Woodlands Ltd, said: *"I'm absolutely delighted for Jillian, who is a fantastic young forester, a natural leader, and someone who works as hard as anyone to make rural communities stronger and better."*

Jillian Kennedy is the second Scottish Woodlands employee to win the future leader award after Neil White, now Regional Manager for Central Scotland and Jillian's boss, took the prize in 2023.

On receiving the award, she said: *"This is fantastic. A massive thank you to Scottish Woodlands for taking a punt on someone from an agricultural background. I'm so grateful and now I've got to live up to this award and realise my full potential."*

Scottish Woodlands again sponsored an award for communications in the forestry and wood industry at the event. The winner of the Championing Forestry and Timber Products Award was the Forestry Commission's Trees to Timber campaign.

The Trust UK C-16 campaign, which promotes the use of more UK-grown timber in construction, was also shortlisted - and was given a special Chair's Award by Lord Duncan, Chair of Confor.

Ian Robinson said: *"There was an exceptional shortlist for the award (also including Dr Eleanor Tew of Forestry England and Andrew Sowerby of Bronwin & Abbey Ltd) and all four finalists are doing great work to promote our industry and its products."*



Ian Robinson of Scottish Woodlands Ltd presents the award to the Forestry Commission's Trees to Timber Campaign



Read the full list of winners of the Confor Awards here:

www.confor.org.uk/news/latest-news/honours-and-celebrations-shared-at-confor-awards



TOP AWARD FOR SCOTTISH WOODLANDS LTD

Scottish Woodlands has won a leading industry prize for its part in creating an "excellent new commercial woodland".

The 210 hectares of forestry planting near Gladhouse Reservoir in Midlothian, won the New Commercial Woods Trophy in Scotland's Finest Woods Awards, presented at a ceremony at the Scottish Parliament.

Neil Aitchison and Michael Wilson of Scottish Woodlands worked with the landowner, Rosebery Estate Partnership, to develop the productive woodland site in the hills to the south-east of Edinburgh.

The planting was carried out in 2020, starting in April, at the height of the Covid-19 pandemic.

"It was a very interesting time to be planting, when the vast majority of people were at home and the roads were so quiet," said Mr Wilson. "We were only able to continue planting, under strict Covid-19 guidelines, because forestry businesses had been granted 'key worker' status due to the strategic importance of the industry."

He paid tribute to Mr Aitchison (now retired), for his huge contribution to the project, as well as Mark Hamilton, the consultant on the Forestry Grant Scheme application, and to Tom Hobbs and Julie Paton at Scottish Forestry.

"It was a really great team effort at a challenging time for everyone involved," Mr Wilson added.



Scotland's Finest Woods Awards praised the partners in the scheme for creating *"a sensitively-designed woodland"*, which reflected the local landscape and the site's cultural heritage. Archaeological features were protected and water quality secured through strict adherence to forests and water guidelines.

The judges said: *"The team (Rosebery Estate Partnership, Galbraith, and Scottish Woodlands Ltd) have achieved the establishment of an excellent new commercial woodland with very good access and potential for high productivity. They have done this while working together with a number of external stakeholders, with whom early engagement has built up a significant level of trust and understanding. All involved should be proud of what they have achieved."*

The New Commercial Woods Trophy was sponsored by wood processor Glennon Brothers, and presented by Mairi Gougeon, the Scottish Government's Cabinet Secretary for Rural Affairs.

Ian Robinson, Managing Director of Scottish Woodlands Ltd, said: *"We always work really hard to create high-quality woodlands, and it's great*

when this is recognised and rewarded. Well done to Michael Wilson and the team, and the other partners in the project for their exceptional work. It's always pleasing to be honoured by the industry."

Wilma Harper, Chair of Scotland's Finest Woods, said: *"This is the 40th anniversary year of Scotland's Finest Woods and what a year it has been for celebrating all that is great about our woods and forests! All our entrants and winners play a vital role and every entry brings a story of collective endeavour and commitment."*





NEW ASSOCIATION FORMED TO PROMOTE UK NATURE-BASED PROJECTS

Five of the UK's leading developers of nature-based projects - including Scottish Woodlands Ltd - have joined forces to form a new coalition.

The UK Nature Projects Association (UKNPA) has been created to promote and accelerate woodland creation and peatland restoration schemes carried out to deliver climate and biodiversity benefits.

A short film has been produced to explain the reasons for creating the Association - and can be viewed here.



It encourages other project developers to come onboard, investors to deliver finance to grow the market, and policy-makers to lend their support.

The five companies - **ADL Nature, Caledonian Climate Partners, CarbonStore (part of Tilhill Forestry), Forest Carbon, and Scottish Woodlands Ltd** - launched the new Association at an event at the Caledonian Club in London.

Project developers, policy-makers, investors, and other organisations involved in promoting woodland creation and peatland restoration, attended the event.

Emma Kerr, Head of Carbon at Scottish Woodlands Ltd, said: *"Planting trees and restoring peatlands are vital for a greener future. Both activities make a significant contribution to removing carbon dioxide out of the atmosphere - vital in combating the damaging effects of climate change."*

Freddie Ingleby, Managing Director of Caledonian Climate Partners, said: *"We set up the Association to bring together those with dirt under their fingers, taking action to create new woodlands and restore peatlands across the UK - and give them a collective voice."*

George Hepburne Scott, Director of Forest Carbon, said: *"Woodland creation and peatland restoration provide a whole range of benefits for society - carbon sequestration, enhancing biodiversity, improving water quality, and reducing flood risk."*



The UK Nature Project Association has been established to bring together the development of nature-based projects across the UK.

"Planting trees and restoring peatlands are vital for a greener future. Both activities make a significant contribution to removing carbon dioxide out of the atmosphere - vital in combating the damaging effects of climate change."

In the UKNPA video, Emm Kerr and George Hepburne are filmed at Lauder Common, a small woodland creation project in the Scottish Borders expected to soak up around 8000 tonnes of CO₂ in its lifetime.

There has been widespread support for the new Association. Pat Snowdon, Head of the Woodland Carbon Code, Scottish Forestry, said: "I welcome the formation of the association. I think it's a really good step forward in the way the market is starting to mature. There's a lot of expertise across this group, which they could really bring together for everyone's benefit."

Helen Avery, Director of Nature Programmes, Green Finance Institute, said: "There is no better group of

organizations to come together who could feed into the design of these markets, help inform policy and regulations and bring the challenges of supply, demand and finance all together."

Andy Grundy, Head of Climate and Landscape at Soil Association Certification, said: "We're really pleased to see the creation of this association. In the early days of an industry like this, you need to put away the competition a little and work together collaboratively to let the sector grow and learn from each other's experiences."

Renée Kerkvliet-Hermans, Peatland Code Manager at IUCN UK Peatland Programme, said: "We welcome the formation of the coalition. It really helps us as a standard to get one way of communicating."

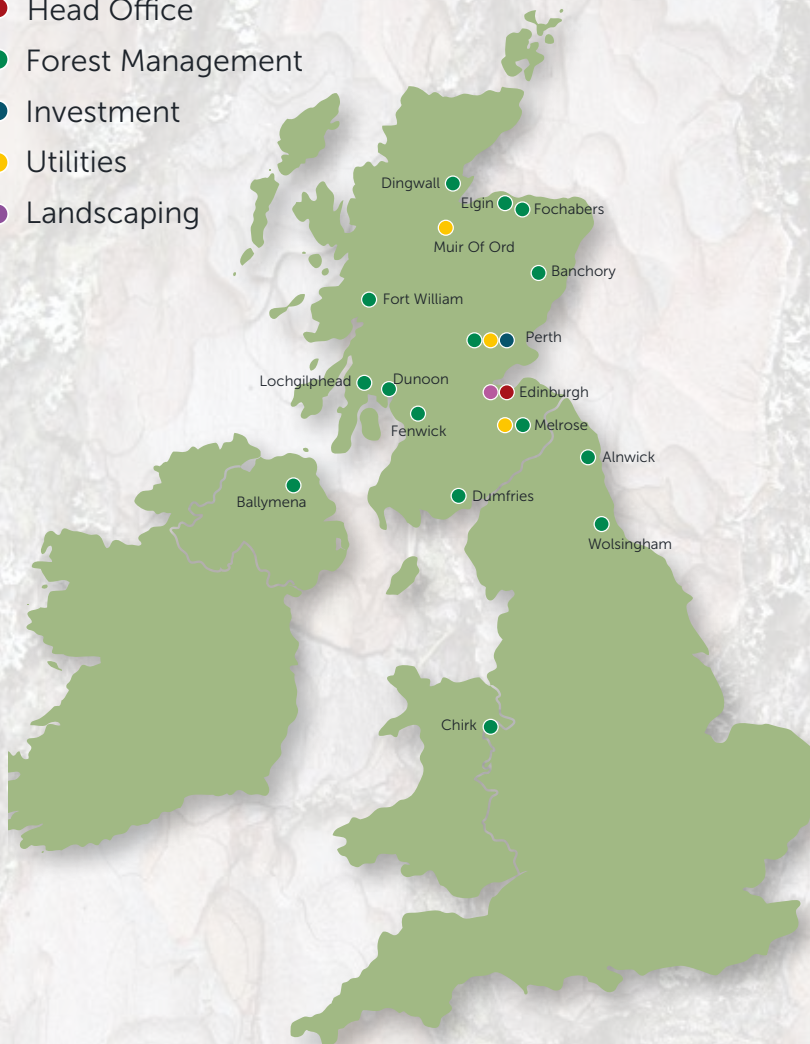
To contact (or join) the coalition, please go to <https://www.uknpa.com> and fill in the simple form.



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.

