

Quarterly Communications Report

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Section 1: Reactive Communications

The most significant issues for reactive media enquiries were:

FE – feral wild boar, re-wilding and seasonal

Boar continue to require attention alongside emergence of seasonal issues such as fires, adders and fungi picking. Re-wilding and the impact on forests and forest management keep piquing the interest of national media too.

FS/Central Services – tree health dominates

Chalara (esp. Lakes & Peak District NPs), *P. ramorum* (esp. in N. Yorks, Devon & Hants), OPM and OCGW all absorbed time of national team supporting local issues as well as dealing with ongoing and new outbreaks as part of Incident Management Team. Also further coverage of Survey of Public Opinion Of Forestry.

National team continues to create new connections, including proactive, individual contact with relatively new science/environment writer for Daily Telegraph (Hana Carter).



Killer snake warning as record number of venomous adders spotted in Britain this year



Confirmed finding of oriental chestnut gall wasp

Last updated: 01 Jul 2015

HorticultureWeek
Visits to woodlands in decline



Mushroom picking in the New Forest should be banned to protect landscape, say campaigners

NFA said 'gangs' descend on the area in autumn to 'blanket pick' mushrooms

Katie Grant | @kgt_grant | Friday 17 July 2015 17:39 BST | [comment](#)



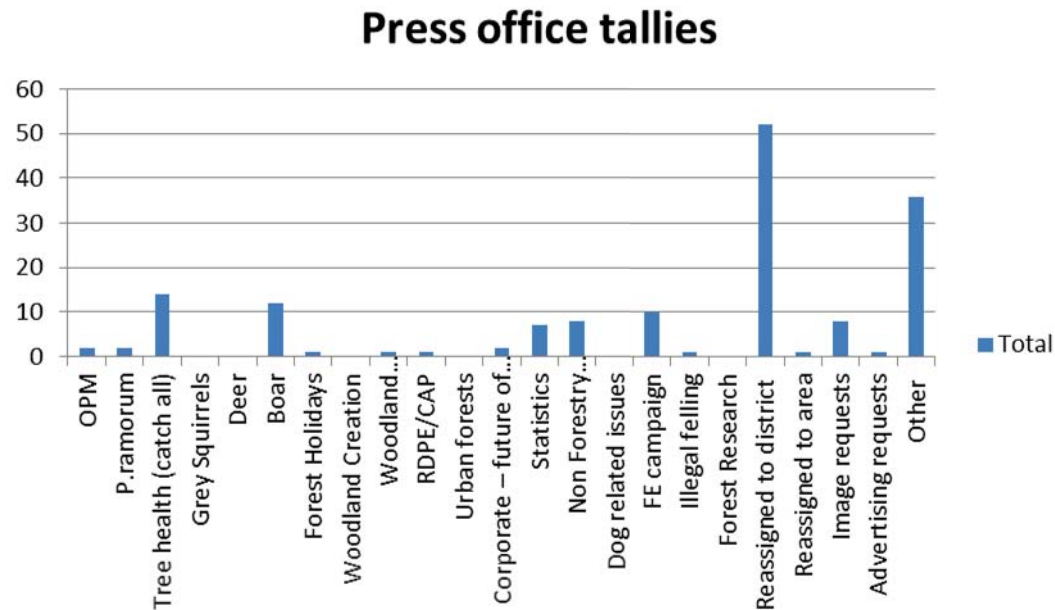
Firefighters deal with large blaze in Thetford Forest



Section 1: Reactive Communications

Press Calls

159 press calls and emails were received during the quarter, with the most common enquiry being district related. The chart below shows the record of calls by topics/ issues.



Section 2: Proactive Communications - FS

Making woodlands work

We have developed a branded toolkit for this strand of work which aims to target unengaged woodland owners, explaining the economic benefits to actively managing their woodlands. This was developed based on feedback received during a survey and in-depth focus group, as well as staff consultations. We have started to research some case studies, which we will continue to build on and make available online via the Forestry Commission website and social media.

Proactive tree health communications

We are holding a series of events around the country highlighting important issues around tree health to local communities, landowners and stakeholders. In addition, we have updated our informative P. Ramorum leaflet to reflect the latest advice and information, and distributed at events as well as through industry, sector and trade publications. We will also be updating and circulating our chalara leaflets, based on findings in the latest surveys. This is part of our plan to work proactively to help stakeholders stay informed and prepared against tree pests and diseases.

Resilience

The CLA Game Fair and the Confor Woodland Show opportunities for us to engage with woodland owners and agents face to face with information and advice. Staff were on hand particularly to discuss wildlife management and diverse planting. We have been supporting the tree health seminars taking place in each District with FEE. We promoted the Climate Change Accord with the number of signatories growing to around 40 and pushing the BWS2015 in readiness for the Resilience Conference in October.

Woodland Carbon Code

We launched pilot of cheaper scheme for small woods at ConFor woodland Show. Press release issued to forestry and farming/land management media.

Plant health

We are updating P. ramorum leaflet, distributing as via forestry magazines; updating national chalara management guidance leaflet.



Section 2: Proactive Communications - FE

FE – Autumn Colours

The autumn colours media campaign was launched this quarter and has resulted in over 150 pieces of press coverage to date including articles in the Express, Daily Mail, the Telegraph, Mail on Sunday, the Times and the Mirror.

The national media consisted of three press releases aimed at different audiences; Forestry Commission predict when autumn is going to happen, The chemistry behind autumn colour change, and the top 5 wild things to do across the Public Forest Estate. The prediction piece has received the most coverage so far, with over 140 articles recorded to date.

On social media the hashtag #autumnleafwatch has been set up to use and own in autumn conversations. Memes have been developed to help users engage with the campaign and to give the campaign a strong identity. A photo competition has also been launched to encourage users to share content and will be promoted across our SM sites.

FE – Licensing awards

The Forestry Commission lead the way in the Licensing Awards 2015, winning the prize of Best Licensed Marketing Communication for their use of the children's story favourite The Gruffalo in attracting visitors to the public forest estate.

A press release has been drafted and this will be sent out to the districts so they can target media that is local to the Gruffalo sites.

FE – Bedgebury germinates critically endangered Japanese Birch

Experts from the Forestry Commission's National Pinetum at Bedgebury succeeded in germinating seeds collected last year from one of the world's most critically endangered trees. This gained excellent local media coverage and was also picked up nationally by the BBC and Horticulture Week Online.



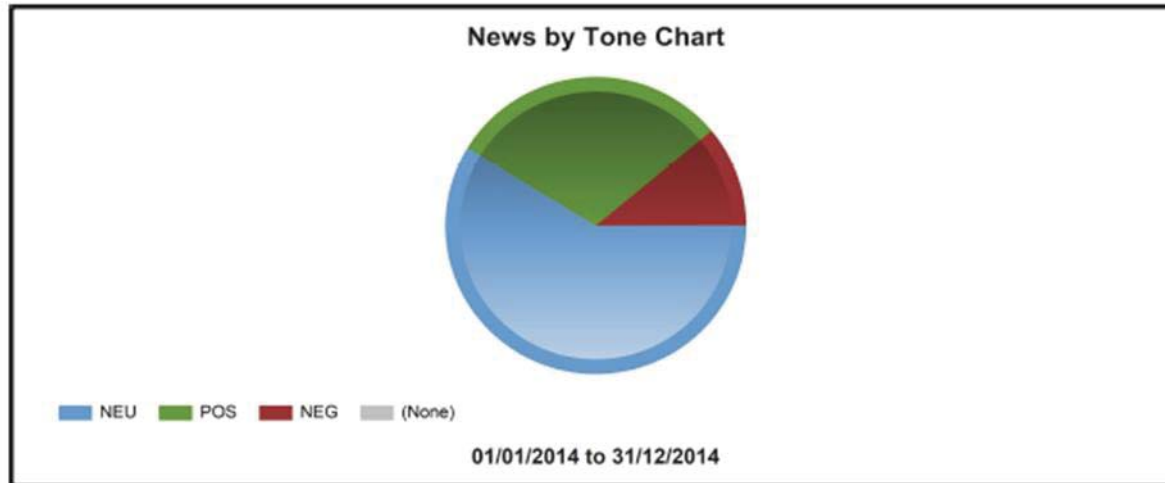
The price of a summer of discontent will be a glorious display of autumn leaves

WE may have shivered during this wet and chilly summer of discontent but at least we can look forward to a glorious display of autumn colours.

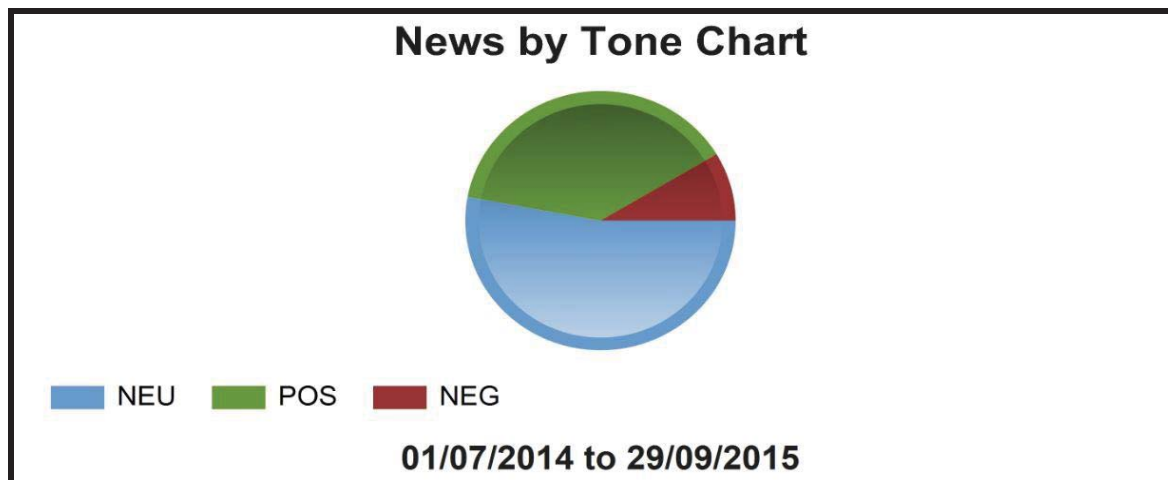
By STUART WINTER
PUBLISHED: 00:00, Thu, Sep 3, 2015 | UPDATED: 14:47, Thu, Sep 3, 2015



Section 3: News by tone



The graphs show a slight decrease in news that was positive this quarter compared with 2014



The 'news by tone' section is automatically generated by our media monitoring system, Vocus. Whilst this is an extremely useful function of the service, sometimes the figures can look odd and we must remember that these are generated online. For example, whilst 58 % coverage this quarter is listed as neutral, this may include seemingly 'negative' stories (i.e. about tree health or wildlife management) however the outcome for us would therefore in fact be 'positive'.

Section 4: In focus – Countryside Stewardship

Outputs

Online

- GOV.UK received the following **unique page views**:
 - “Get paid for environmental land management” - 17,159
 - Countryside Stewardship Manual - 41,638
 - Woodland only HT application form - 2,666
- FC’s CS webpage received 1,397 UPV.
- Compared to the industry average of 23%, our **average e-alert open rate was 43%. E-alert subscribers increased by 272% from 1045 to 3843.**
- Eight tweets were seen 24,800 times (impressions). 330 users engaged with these tweets, 105 of which clicked on a URL link.
- 32 potential applicants took part in our CS webinar.

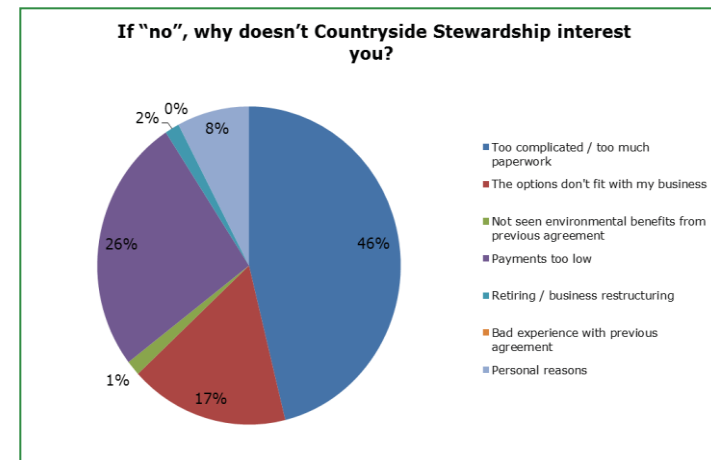
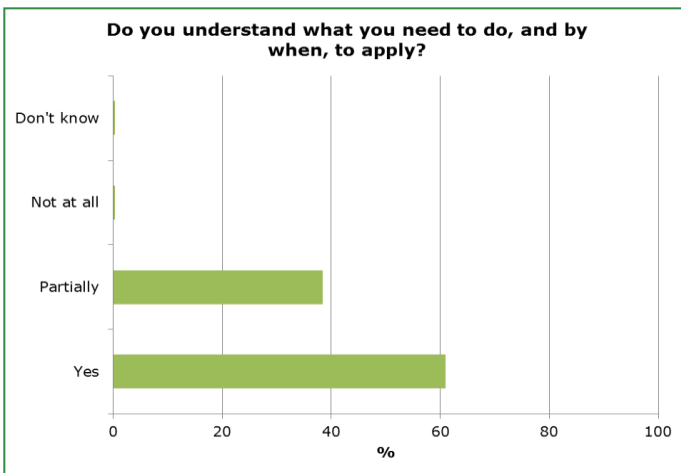
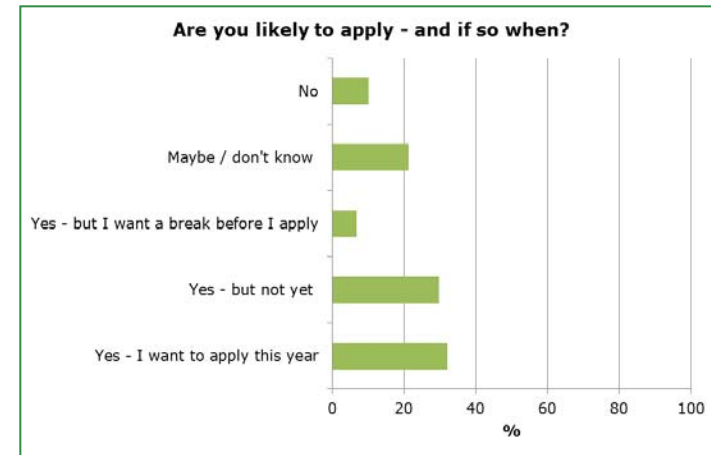
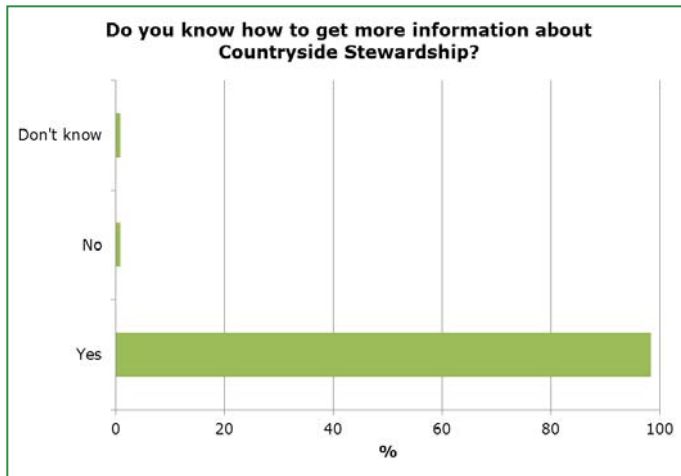
Offline

- **Articles** were published in Forestry & Timber News and Forestry Journal.
- **Ten local Area events** engaged **646** agents and potential applicants.

Outcomes

- Our events proved popular and were successful in building awareness of the scheme. 68% of respondents said they would apply for the scheme at some point.
- The application process itself is complex and was a challenge to communicate clearly.
- Information was agreed late and this impacted our ability to communicate in a timely fashion.
- Some audiences lacked confidence in the scheme, with more saying they would apply in future (36%) than this year (32%).
- Our co-branded marketing materials successfully communicated the scheme in a joined-up and balanced way.
- We remained flexible in the face of uncertainty, revising our communication plan and key messages on a regular basis.
- **A total of 256 applications have been received.**

Section 4: In focus – Countryside Stewardship event feedback



Section 5: In focus – Autumn Colours



Objectives:

- To promote the Public Forest Estate as a fantastic place to go and see autumn colours
- To promote the Forestry Commission as experts in trees and woodlands
- To increase the number of visitors to the Public Forest Estate
- To engage with members of the public to get them involved in our social media sites

National PR:

Forestry Commission to predict when autumn will happen with Andrew Smith as spokesperson
 Why do leaves change colour – the science behind why they do what they do!
 Wildlife focus – Top 5 wild things to do across the PFE

The national PR also promotes the top 10 walks to see autumn colour in England, GB's colour changing map and our social media pages using the hashtag #autumncolourwatch

Regional PR

Localised from national releases
 Promotion of local sites/ events

Social Media

- To use and 'own' #autumnleafwatch hashtag in autumn conversations
- To share images, info and events linked to PFE sites that have key attractions for autumn colour
- To show FC as experts and an authoritative voice when talking about autumn leaf colour and autumnal changes in the trees, woods and FC
- To create a downloadable PDF on the science behind leaf change to send to national media



Section 5: In focus – Autumn Colours

Coverage so far....

Press

- 157 pieces of press including coverage in the Express, Daily Mail, Telegraph, Mail on Sunday, Times and the Mirror
- All press releases have received coverage, however the predictions piece was received the best by media with 154 pieces of coverage

Social Media

- 23 tweets
- 54,250 impressions
- 1430 engagements
- 270 click troughs to Autumn web page

Nature notes

Autumn leaves its mark on our trees

AUTUMN has arrived and several species of trees are changing colour. The first to switch are some of our native trees such as the wild cherry, common spindle and dog wood.

During the summer, leaves contain high levels of green chlorophyll which harnesses energy from sunlight to combine water and CO₂ to create sugars, which feed the plant. In autumn, trees prepare for a shortage of light and water in winter and live off food that was stored in the summer.

Gradually chlorophyll disappears from the leaves and other chemicals take over, such as carotene - the substance that gives a carrot its colour. These colours are in the leaves all year but were hidden by green chlorophyll.

In some trees such as maple, glucose is trapped in the leaves after photosynthesis stops. Sunlight and the cool nights of autumn cause the leaves to turn this glucose red.

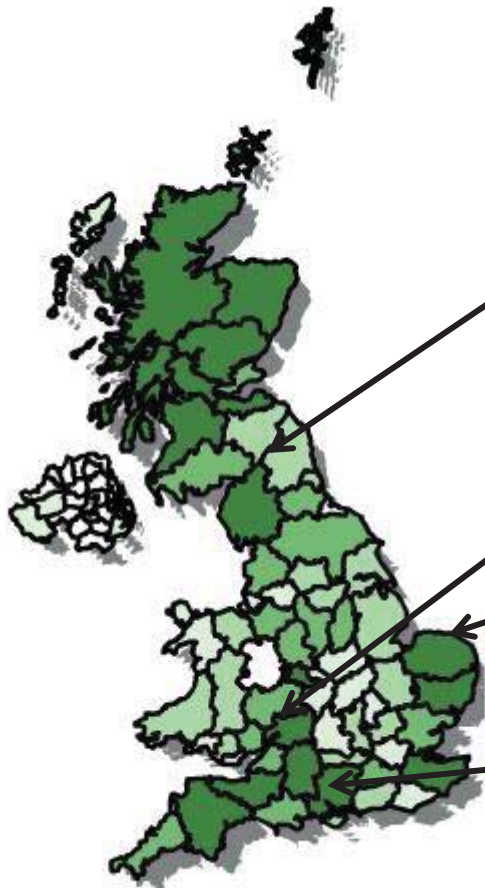
Hana Carter



Changing Colours at the National Arboretum in Salisbury, Gloucestershire, take on autumn colours. Unsettled weather is expected across Britain this week. [Newark, page 30](#)



Section 6: District media engagement – Headlines this quarter



North England

- Warm wet summer is perfect for producing intense foliage displays
- Forests are for families – Get yours and your little one's wellies on
- Hen harrier team say thank you for support

West England

- Enjoy the great outdoors at Treefest the Bank Holiday Weekend
- Wet summer could yield rich autumnal colours
- An autumn wonder in stunning surroundings

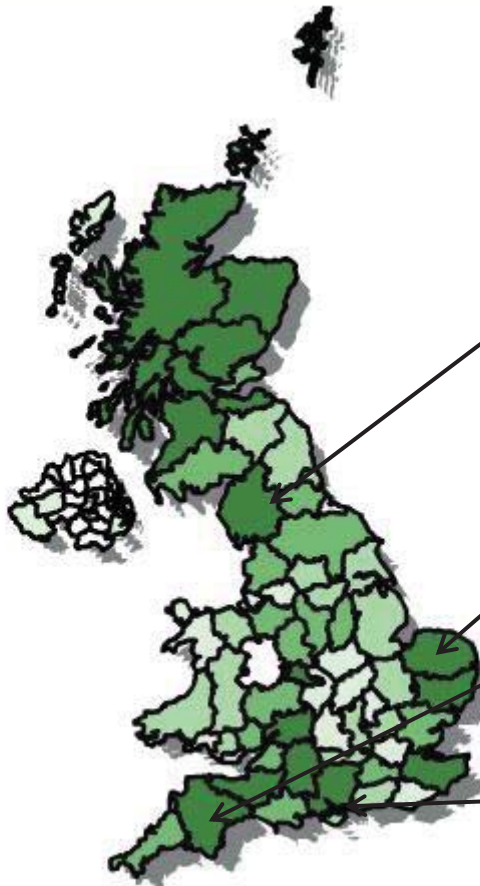
East England

- Summer rain set to bring autumn colour starburst
- Cameras uncover secret life of birds
- Why I love magical Thetford Forest
- Thetford in autumn – There are lots of reasons to get out and about

South England

- Plans to target fungi collection
- FC slated over more parking encroachment
- Wetland conservation scheme visited by conservative chief
- Pigs out in the forest

Section 7: Area communications



North West and West Midlands

- Countryside stewardship opening events –170 attendees
- 'Banking for the future' leaflets produced with partners

East & East Midlands

- Countryside stewardship opening events – 115 attendees
- Story published in Bark
- Steve Scott interviewed for BBC television on Biosecurity and Tree Health (on Look East)

South West

- Countryside stewardship opening events – 157 attendees
- Blackdowns Woodland Fair
- Making Woodlands work focus group set up

South East & London

- OPM peak communication time
- iTree promotion
- Discussions regarding London Tree week and award plans

Section 8: Social Media

Forestry Commission England



@ForestryCommEng followers:
13,515 (up 9% on last quarter)
Engagement rate (no. of engagements divided by impressions - Impressions are the number of times a post is displayed in users' feeds):

1.7% (up 0.4% on last quarter)

Forest Enterprise



Forestry Commission Woods and Forests Facebook page likes:
16,672 (up 6% on last quarter)
• **Engagement rate** (no. of engagements divided by impressions - Impressions are the number of times a post is displayed in users' feeds):

3.3% (up 0.1% on last quarter)

Top posts – Forest Enterprise



Section 8: Social Media

Forest Services



@TreePestNews followers: 3648 (up 5% on last quarter)

Confor Woodland Show 2015

Using @ForestryCommEng and the network of FC individual Twitter users #Confor2015 was used to promote the seminar programme and FC presence at the show.

Objective: promote FC seminar programme and tent, encourage others to adopt #Confor2015 hashtag to round up conversations from the show

@ForestryCommEng

27 tweets

Combined reach > **41,000** users

397 engagements

(Clicks on any element of the Tweet, including retweets, replies, links, hashtags, embedded media)

96 clicks to seminar programme webpage

Top posts – Forest Services

Forestry Commission
@ForestryCommEng
Find out about the Climate Change Accord: a Call for Resilient Forests, Woods and Trees bit.ly/CCAccord2015 #CLAGF



RETWEETS: 24 FAVORITES: 8

4:00 PM - 31 Jul 2015

Forestry Commission
@ForestryCommEng
VIDEO: Create and enhance habitats for wildlife through coppicing: youtu.be/Pk7o4q87h-A #MakingWoodlandsWork



RETWEETS: 12 FAVORITES: 11

Forestry Commission
@ForestryCommEng
Living in tree-lined street has health benefits of being 7 years younger, study shows: bit.ly/1eozCd



RETWEETS: 15 FAVORITES: 10

6:18 PM - 25 Jul 2015

Forestry Commission
@ForestryCommEng
Do you work in small woodlands? Sign up for live machinery demonstrations at #Confor2015: bit.ly/1J6Ow1Q



RETWEETS: 5 FAVORITES: 4

12:00 PM - 25 Aug 2015

Section 9: Web Update

Forest Plans

As part of a citizen engagement project, we have developed for FE a new area and functionality to publish Forest Plans. This includes graphics made dynamically for each plan based on the information entered by the publisher and automated reciprocal links with the relevant recreation pages. The project has now been rolled out to publishers in the Districts although the pages are not live yet.

Publications catalogue

A programme of digitisation to convert all hard copy FC publications to digital formats is nearly complete, and the delivery of these publications via an online archive is required. To answer this urgent business requirement to make the digital back catalogue of FC publications available online via www.forestry.gov.uk/publications we upgraded the existing catalogue and the search functionality. The prototype has been rolled out to the Publications team and we will go live when they have entered their back catalogue.

Search Engine Optimisation (SEO)

As part of our joint project with FE to improve the website to raise our ranking in search engines to attract as many users as possible, we continue to optimise the site for search engines such as Google and Bing. Current work concentrates on fixing broken images and links. This is also important for the user experience of the website.

Accessibility testing

We conducted tests on a set of key pages (homepages, sections pages) to ensure they are as close as possible to meeting industry standard 'AA' accessibility level. This ensures that we comply with government guidelines and should indirectly boost our search ranking (SEO) and our commitments to diversity.

Smart banners

To market and raise the profile of our recreation Apps (Forest Xplorer and TreeQuest) we have introduced a new 'smart' banner which selectively displays the most appropriate App on any page on mobile devices. For example, the banner will display TreeQuest on Westonbirt pages and ForestXplorer on others. This banner is available on all recreation pages and is available for all types of systems (iOS, Android or Windows).

FEE+ Web Project Update

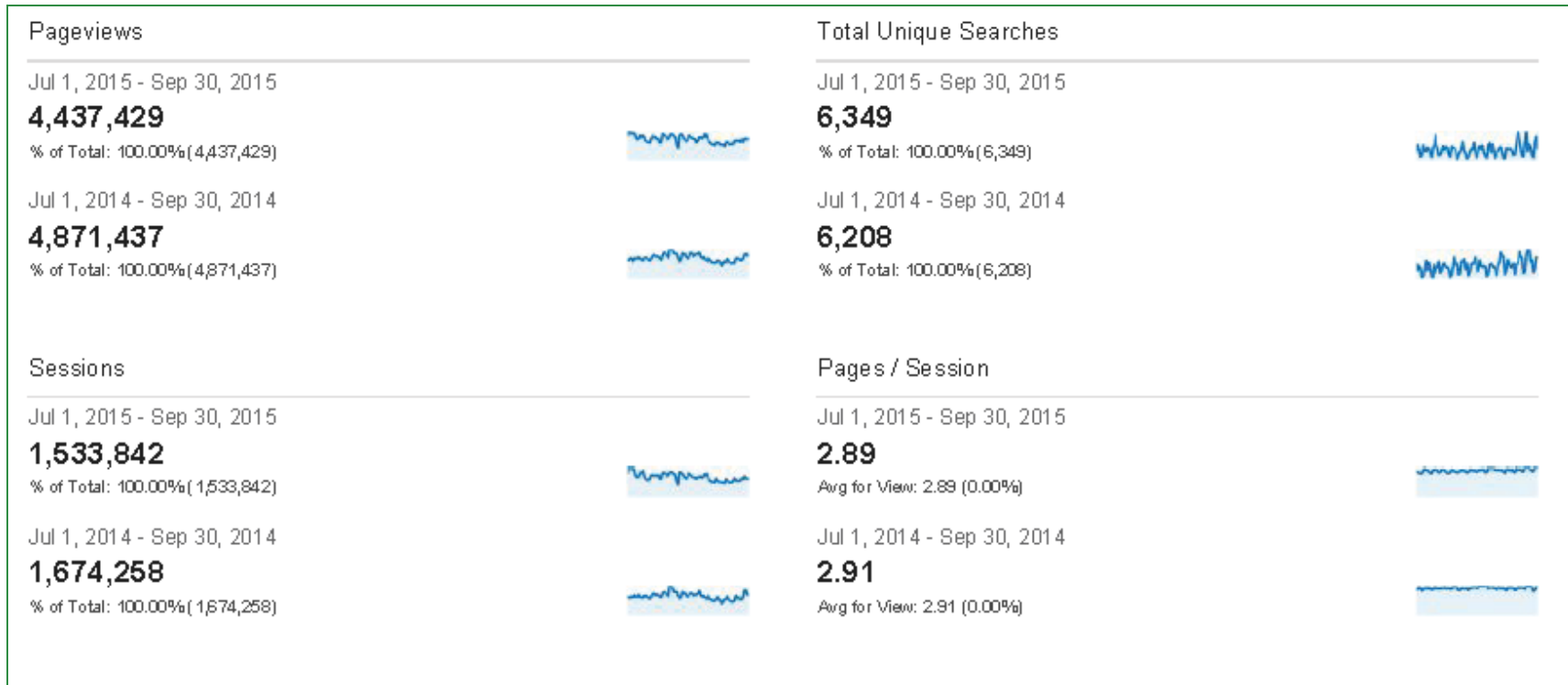
Have designed and agreed the Information Architecture (layout) of the proposed FEE+ website.

An offline clickable prototype is now in place.

We are now in the process of working up design visuals for the Homepage and subsequent landing pages below that.

Currently identifying information owners who can provide content where there is content needed in the new structure.

Section 9: Web Update



There's a 10% drop-off in traffic against last year (this effects the sessions and the session/page figs.)

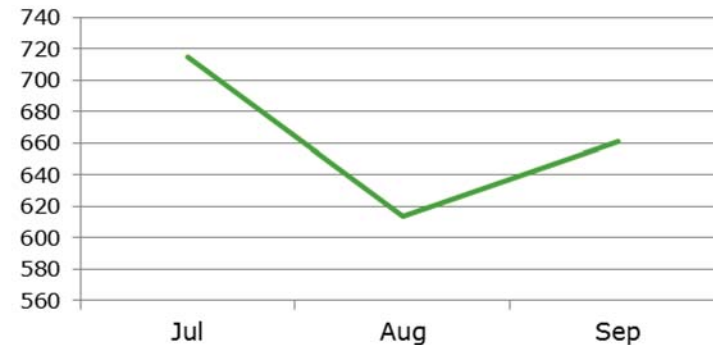
There's no one thing to suggest what had caused this – however there is a 10% drop off consistently across popular Recreation pages (Westonbirt 16%, Delamere 12% , etc) so Gruffalo may have caused an upturn last year.

Section 10: Internal Communications

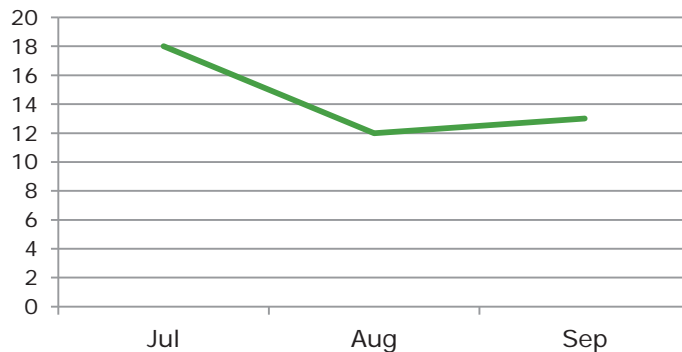
Most popular articles in Bark in this period:

1. Introducing Teresa Betterton – Area Admin Officer, East & East Midlands
2. Rising into the record books – Robert Harris' hot air balloon world record attempt
3. Gruffalo trails win high profile award
4. FC Team on giant hunt in California – seed collecting expedition

Number of Bark readers



Number of Yammer posts



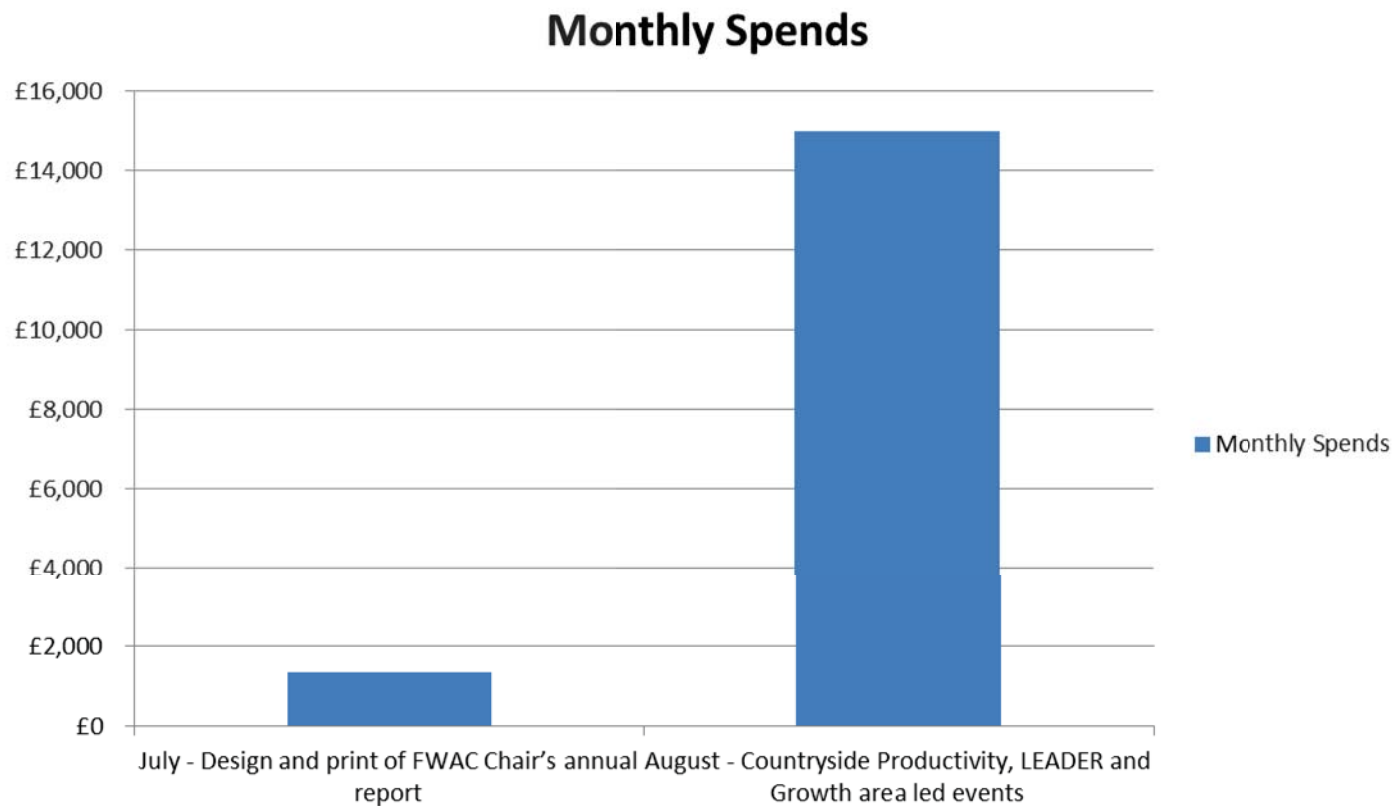
Number of people who read Ian Gambles' August email:

241

Number of people watched the Releasing our Potential 'launch' film:

173

Section 11: Spending Controls



Section 12: Spending Controls – Outcomes

Design and print of FWAC Chair's annual report

To support activity for communicating to stakeholders the work of FWAC England-wide committees and their value to Forestry.

Countryside Productivity, LEADER and Growth area led events

To promote opportunities to the forestry sector and targeted support provided to help secure growth in forestry businesses - securing of 700 jobs, increasing the area of active woodland management by 100,000 hectares and bringing an extra 950,000 green tonnes of wood to the market.

To support and facilitate the development of market led solutions to increase the level of active woodland management and support rural economic growth as part of LEADER and the Growth programme. We want to see an increase of 1-2,000 woodland owners/agents and 2-3,000 businesses collaborating with each other and attending networking events by the end of the new programme.

To increase the economic potential from undermanaged woodlands to ensure the successful delivery of wider Government commitments such as the Renewable Heat Incentive and bring about innovation to this key rural sector. We want to see an increase in some 4-5,000 woodland owners/agents submitting woodland management plans and applying for grants (funded under Stewardship but market development funded under CP/LEADER) by the end of the new programme.

To engage forestry sector intermediaries such as land agents and woodland organisations to help promote better collaboration in drawing up plans for capital investment/business and skills development and submitting quality applications for support

Section 13: Forward Look

Forest Services

Resilience

- We are working with the RFS and Woodland Trust to research how landowners and professionals engage with ideas around future-proofing landscapes against pests, diseases, climate change and wildlife. The research will be used to inform a communications campaign that highlighting these issues and aids access to information, guidance and advice.

Tree Health

- We plan to implement a proactive campaign highlighting the importance of observing good biosecurity practice, and setting out a clear call to action for the industry to lead by example in helping slow the spread of pests and diseases.

Making Woodlands Work

- The 'Making Woodlands Work' branded toolkit will be used at regional informal networking events throughout the autumn around the country to highlight the advice and help available to landowners, and we will implement a media and stakeholder engagement plan to support this.

Forest Enterprise

Christmas

- A proactive media strategy has been planned which shows how Christmas trees are a fantastic example of sustainable woodland management, including benefits for the environment and the economy. Also a look at the Forestry Commission Forestry experience, promoting the PFE as a fantastic place to get into the Christmas spirit with our events/walks/festive stalls

Learning

- A proactive press release to be targeted at education press the Gruffalo's teachers pack (once ready). This will look at how the pack links to the key stages of the national curriculum, highlighting the benefits of learning outside the classroom and the importance of our learning message.