

# Quarterly Communications Report

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# Section 1: Reactive Communications

The most significant issues for reactive media enquires were:

## FE – feral wild boar, lynx, illegal rave

Feral wild boar issues continue to create work locally and nationally including incidents and surveys. The Lynx Trust continued to link the PFE to their reintroduction ambitions and an illegal rave attracted a disproportionate amount of media attention. A fire in Thetford forest generated some media interest, with TV crews turning up on site while the fire services were still trying to manage the situation. Because of this coverage, we then received calls from people due to attend the Script concert at Thetford as there was concern that this would be cancelled.

## FS/Central Services – woodfuel policy, illegal felling, Public Opinion Forestry and tree health

The impacts of woodfuel on woodlands has been raised in the national media and we have explained the policy. Reports of illegal felling continue to attract local media attention expecting a regulatory response, and the statistical release of the Public Opinion of Forestry crossed FS, FEE and Central Services. The discovery of Oriental chestnut gall wasp in sweet chestnut trees in Kent achieved mostly balanced, factual coverage from a small number of the nationals as well as regional TV and local media.



**Horrified couple watch dog savaged by WILD BOAR that jumped out on footpath**

**FINANCIAL TIMES** Campaigners push to bring lynx back to UK within months

Pilita Clark, Environment Correspondent

## MailOnline

**Where HAVE all our woods gone? Up in smoke - as the new trendy 'green' wood-burning stoves and boilers (funded by tax millions) are being fuelled by birches and oaks... leaving swathes of Britain barren**

## The Telegraph



HOME » NEWS » EARTH

Woodland walks on the wane 'due to lack of time and interest'

Number of people visiting forests and woodland in the UK has fallen significantly, official figures show

 25
  66
  0
  0
  91
  Email



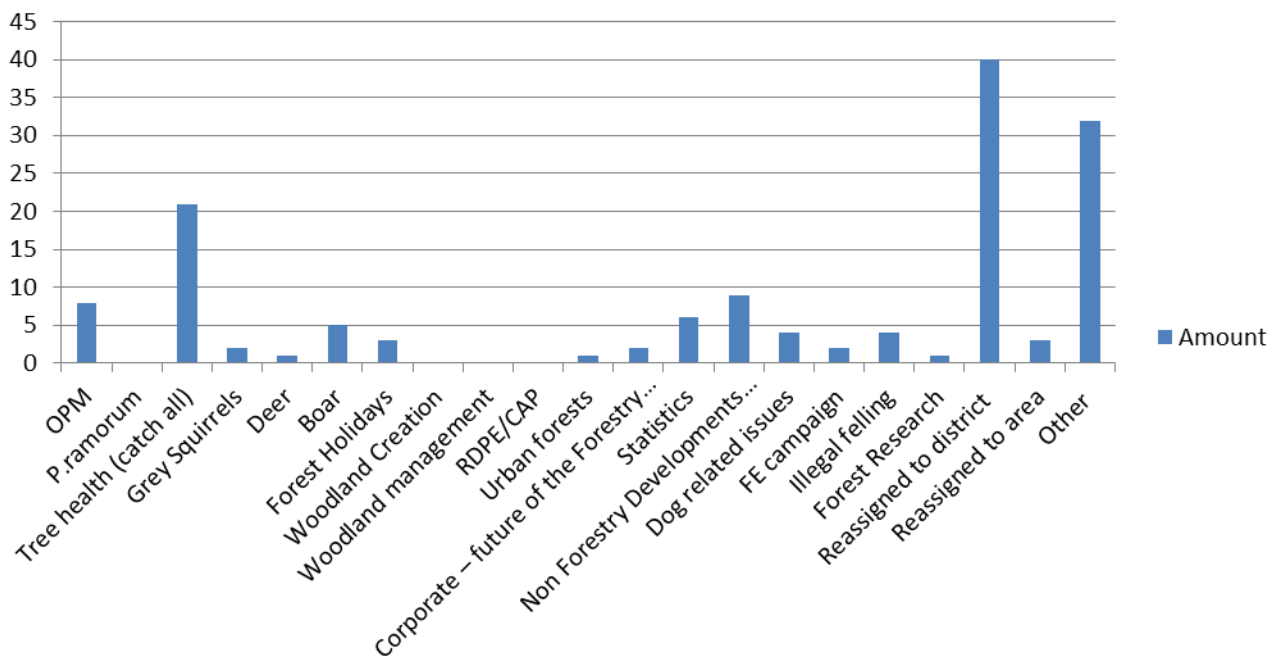
Just 56 per cent of survey respondents had visited woodland in recent years, down from 77 per cent in 2009. Photo: ALAMY

# Section 1: Reactive Communications

## Press Calls

144 press calls were received during the quarter, with the most common enquiry being district related. The chart below shows the record of calls by topics/ issues. From July 2015, we will also be monitoring the media traffic received by email to the team.

Press office tallies



## Section 2: Proactive Communications

### FS – Woodlands into management

Camargue have completed the audit of materials and stakeholder relationships and put forward recommendations on what we need to focus on in 2015/16. Three focus groups with unengaged woodland owners will start in the South West in July and be followed by the north, east/south east. There are also plans to hold a similar workshop with staff. An online survey has been developed and will be distributed through the CLA and NFU to their members. Other work includes development of a communications toolkit including a one pager on why you should manage your woodlands, the benefits and what support/advice is available, as well as new banners, template invites, feedback forms etc to be used at events. Camargue are also developing a media plan, key messages and short case studies.

### FS - Resilience

The wildlife management strategy for 2015/16 is currently being refreshed.

### FS - Countryside Stewardship

To support the launch of Countryside Stewardship, a series of ten Area events (plus one webinar) were developed to provide local foresters, landowners and agents with a comprehensive overview of the scheme's woodland options and practical advice on how to create a competitive application. At the time of writing, we have so far engaged a total of 268 individuals at four events. The scheme and available options have been received with enthusiasm. Most questions have focused on the Rural Payments Agency and their systems, and also the short timescale for applications in 2015. Data has been collected at each event via feedback forms to assist with the evaluation of likely demand for the scheme and our own communications.



## Countryside stewardship launches – but still lacks detail

Wednesday 1 July 2015 0:01

Johann Tasker

Full details of the government's countryside stewardship scheme will not be available until mid-July – even though the scheme opened for applications this week.

The 2000 initiative, which replaces earlier level



## Section 2: Proactive Communications

### FS – Tree Health and OPM

As has become usual at this time of year, proactive tree health comms was dominated by our seasonal awareness-raising campaign on oak processionary moth. Once again we distributed leaflets and posters targeted at the public to a range of premises across the affected areas.

We also produced an on-line oak tree owners' manual to support people who own or manage oak trees which might become infested, issued a press release to local media, and instituted a programme of regular 'tweets' from @craigharrisonfc, supported by retweets from @treepestnews and @ForestryCommEng. These in turn are being well retweeted by their followers, some of whom have large followings. We established a regular emailed "Update" to stakeholders in response to requests at the 2014 'lessons learned' workshop for better information dissemination during the season.

Indications are that public awareness of OPM is significantly up on previous years, with a noticeable increase in good-quality reports of affected trees coming directly from members of the public.



### FS – CAP D

Delays to the CAP-D programme have increased the need for communications to Forest Services staff in the last quarter. This has primarily been achieved via the monthly Information Release and on occasion by email from Richard Greenhouse. Two webinars were held in advance of the launch of Countryside Stewardship to brief them on the detail of the scheme and update them on our joint ways of working with our Natural England colleagues. A rapid update and feedback briefing has also been established for Area Directors and Partnership and Expertise Managers to take place twice a week to give the Areas a place to raise any issues and provide an overview of top line messages for communication.

UK ▾ / World ▾ / Business ▾ / People / Science / [Environment](#) ▾ / Media ▾ / Technology / Education ▾ / Images / Ot

News > Environment > Nature

## Beware dangerous caterpillar, says Forestry Commission

### Countryside stewardship launches – but still lacks detail

Wednesday 1 July 2015 0:01

Johann Tasker

Full details of the government's countryside stewardship scheme will not be available until mid-July – even though the scheme opened for applications this week.

The £900m initiative, which replaces entry-level and higher-level environmental stewardship, opened on Wednesday (1 July).

Defra said the grants would help pay for





## Section 2: Proactive Communications

### FE – Thank You Campaign

13 sites across the North, Central and South Forest Districts, with National Comms support, implemented the Thank You campaign this quarter. The campaign is designed to create positive feeling at a District level, increase understanding of the Forestry Commission's work, find out how visitors think their car parking fees are spent and build loyalty through promotion of the Discovery Pass. This quarter saw the analysis of the campaign's baseline customer survey results, creation of key messages to suit individual sites and editing artwork to support the campaign's messages, along with planning collateral (such as a video being produced in the North District) to share key messages offsite.

### FE - Forest Live

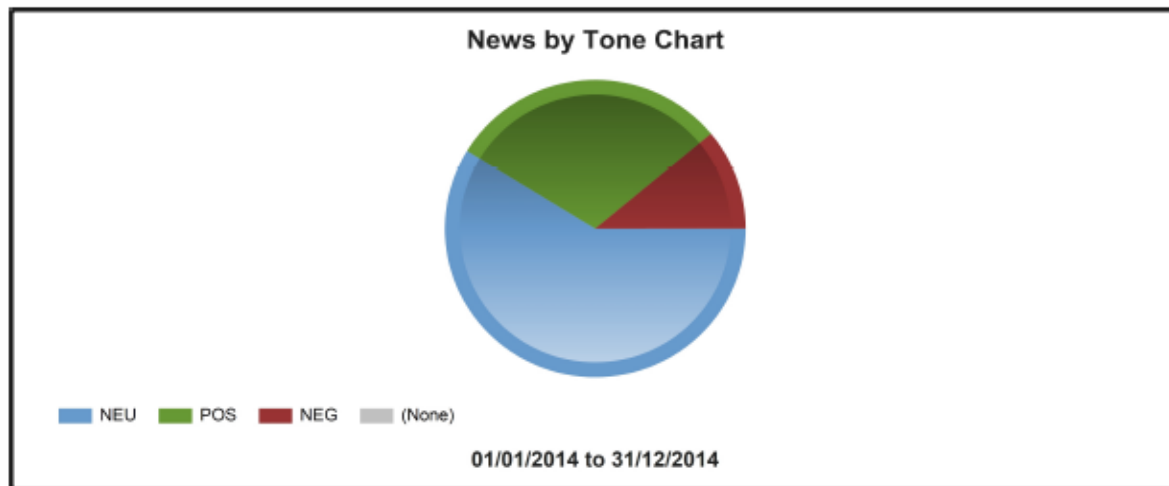
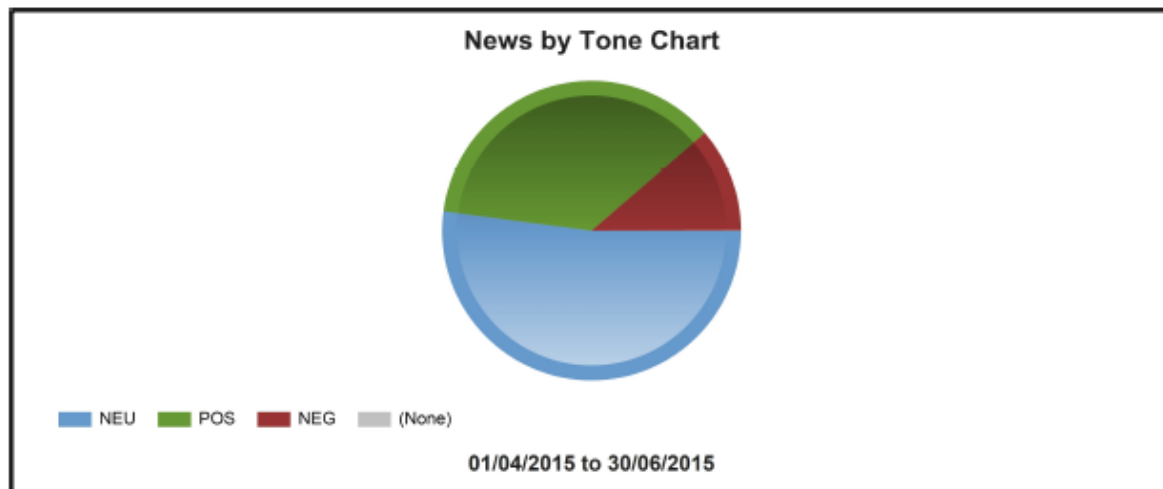
We continue to secure great media coverage – both in numbers, (now in the thousands), and quality of articles – for the Forest Live concert programme. This peaked in June prior to the concerts starting and we are now looking at gathering any media reviews to use to help inform the evaluation process.



Number of Clips Delivered by Media Type Over Time



## Section 3: News by tone



The graphs show an increase 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 62 % coverage 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'.



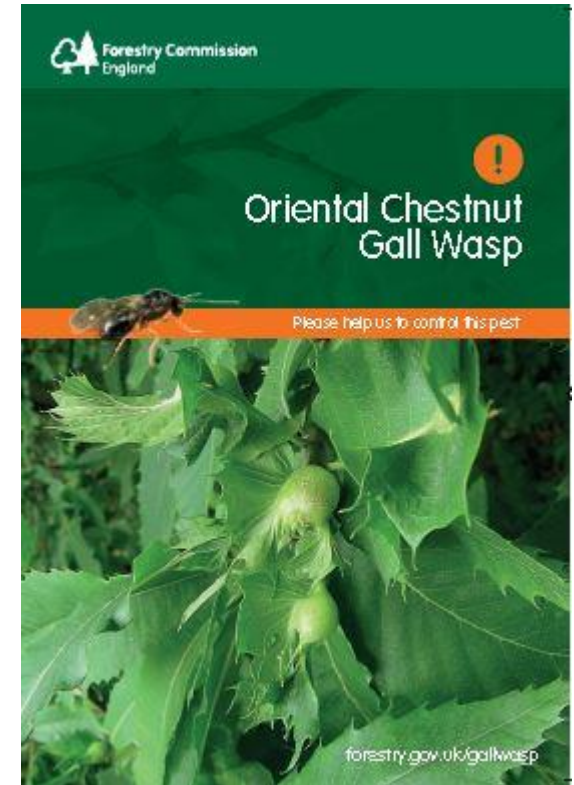
## Section 4: In focus – Oriental chestnut gall wasp

### Within days of notification of the discovery:

- Web page developed - [www.forestry.gov.uk/gallwasp](http://www.forestry.gov.uk/gallwasp)
- Symptoms guides produced in mobile device-friendly formats as well as pdf - available from above website
- Statement produced and distributed to stakeholders and forestry trade media
- Reactive lines to take and media handling plan produced for media enquiries
- Established co-operative working relationship with Sevenoaks District Council communications team
- Photographs obtained and uploaded to FC picture library
- Hosted visits to Farningham Woods by BBC and ITV
- Responded to several other local and national media enquiries
- Established a media log

### We are now:

- Adding more photographs to picture library
- Printing leaflet for distribution to households in Farningham Woods locality to ask for sighting reports, esp on private property
- Updating website as situation develops
- Tweeting appeals for vigilance and sighting reports



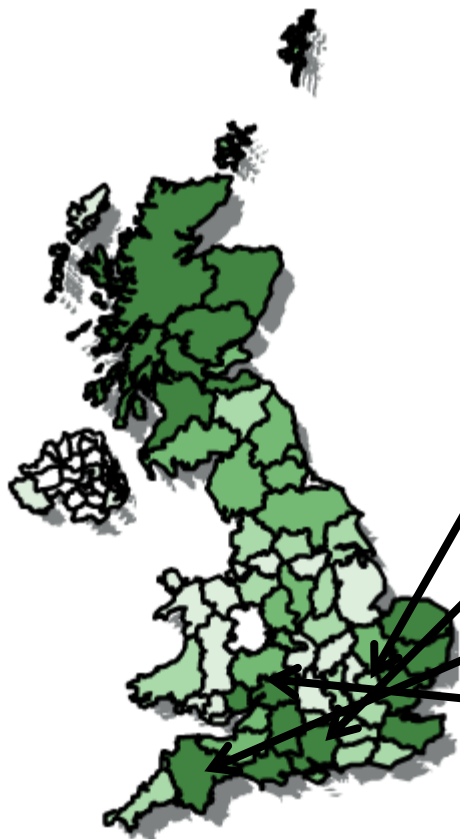
## Section 5: In focus – Forest Holidays

Forest Holidays has appointed a new communications lead to look at their stakeholder and media engagement on the corporate side of the business, and specifically during the planning proposal processes. This role is new to the business and sits separately to the marketing side of the business.

- We are supporting this work in a number of ways:
  - We are supporting Forest Holidays in the development of a communications plan which will look at the whole communications package for planning proposals. As part of this, we are drafting media and stakeholder engagement protocols - which should give us the clarity we would all find beneficial on roles, responsibilities and timings – and writing new key messages to ensure there is clarity on the relationship between the FC and FH. These will be highlighted more strongly on both websites.
  - We have already drafted a stakeholder engagement plan and are working with Forest Holidays to start rolling this out on any new planning proposals. We will ensure all district comms leads have this information once approved.
  - Forest Holidays are currently developing a new web area for their corporate offering which will sit slightly separately to their existing commercial site. We are advising on this and offering to help with user testing. As part of this new website, FH is creating a new video which will be featuring our very own Simon Hodgson! We hope to use parts of this video internally to help our own colleagues understand the commercial nature of this relationship.
  - Moving forward, we will be working together to look at some possible proactive opportunities to highlight Forest Holidays as part of the FC's wider commercial offering.



## Section 6: District media engagement



### East District

- Sam Smith to play Thetford Forest live gig this summer
- Where to find the best bluebells this spring in Norfolk
- Fresh cycling and walking routes as Ride for Life moves to new base after 22 years

### South District

- Time to get wiggly
- Guided Forest Walk
- Barbecues cause fury in the New Forest

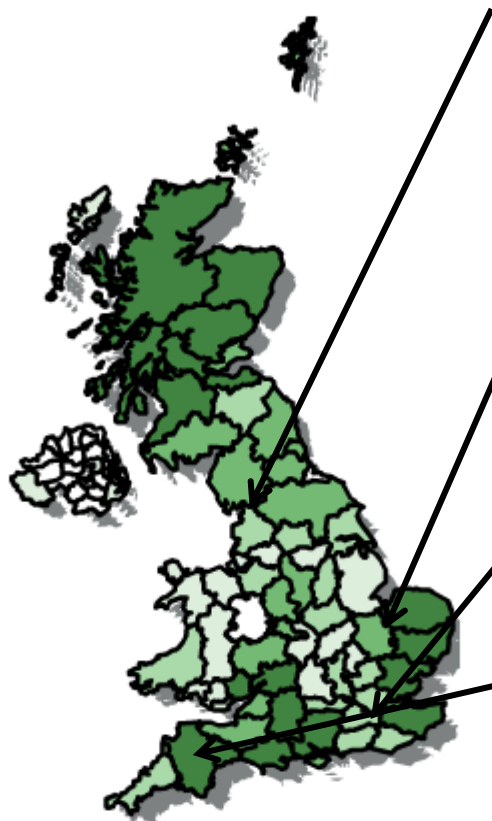
### West District

- 'Here we go', it's a first for Status Quo
- How the West helped get Spitfires off the ground
- Food for thought on woodland visit

### Westonbirt

- X Factor stars Union J named as supporters for the Vamps
- Westonbirt 10k
- Review: Paloma Faith brings her sparkle to Westonbirt

## Section 7: Area communications



### North West & West Midlands

- Roots to prosperity (R2P) productive woodland prospective
- Countryside stewardship planning events for June
- Trans Pennine express launched the 8<sup>th</sup> year of joint grants

### East and East Midlands

- Completion of the Making Woodlands Work video - - RDPE grants which can be found on you tube
- Steve Scott appeared in Bark

### South East & London

- London Tree & Woodland Awards 27<sup>th</sup> May – organisation of evening, case studies, media plans if permitted
- London Tree Week 23-31<sup>st</sup> May – OPM workshop and supporting GLA comms plans e.g. tree or false twitter
- Comms to conclude London Tree Week and London Tree & Woodland Awards, including Bark article

### South West

- Very successful attendance at the Renewable Energy Marketplace at Exeter, as partners with RegenSW. Much interest in FC.
- Tree Health newsletter being promoted at every opportunity.
- Comms to conclude London Tree Week and London Tree & Woodland Awards, including Bark article

# Section 8: Social Media

## Forestry Commission England



**@ForestryCommEng followers:**

**12,393** (up 11% on last quarter)

Engagement rate (no. of engagements divided by impressions - Impressions are the number of times a post is displayed in users' feeds):

**1.3%** (down 0.2% on last quarter)

## Forest Enterprise



**Forestry Commission Woods and Forests Facebook page likes: 15,622** (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):

**3.2%** (down 0.1% on last quarter)

## Top posts – Forest Enterprise

**Forestry Commission Woods and Forests** Like Page

April 27 · Edited · 🌳

It's #walkyourdogweek! Get yourself and your furry four-legged friend out and enjoying getting active in the great outdoors. We have some great ideas for tail-wagging activities - here's just one: try getting your dog to jump up and over a forest log! <http://bit.ly/WalkYourDogWeek>




6,316 people reached Boost Post

Like · Comment · Share · 🍷 14 🗨 5 ↻ 12

**Forestry Commission Woods and Forests** Like Page

Published by Sian Fullylovey [?] · May 24 · Edited [?] · 🌳

Don't miss out on amazing live music in the forest this summer! [www.forestry.gov.uk/music](http://www.forestry.gov.uk/music)




9,096 people reached Boosted

Like · Comment · Share · 🍷 36 🗨 2 ↻ 13

**Forestry Commission Woods and Forests** Like Page

May 8 · 🌳

How walking in the woods benefits your health. Read more at [bit.ly/1Jtu1xg](http://bit.ly/1Jtu1xg)



**How walking in the woods benefits your health**  
Studies have shown specific ways in which spending time hiking around in a forest makes us both mentally and physically more healthy.  
MNN.COM

7,036 people reached Boost Post

Like · Comment · Share · 🍷 102 🗨 3 ↻ 64



# Section 8: Social Media

## Forest Services



@TreePestNews Twitter  
followers: 3496 (up 5% on last  
quarter)

## Top posts – Forest Enterprise



**Forestry Commission**  
@ForestryCommEng

Woodland Capital Grants 2015: Woodland creation applications must be received by 31 May [bit.ly/1w0Qpfl](http://bit.ly/1w0Qpfl)



RETWEETS 17 FAVORITES 3

11:30 AM - 18 May 2015



**Forestry Commission**  
@ForestryCommEng

What is coppicing?  
[youtu.be/FkRuMqVuJDE](http://youtu.be/FkRuMqVuJDE)  
#MakingWoodlandsWork



What is coppicing?  
Jon Rau from the Forestry Commission explores the traditional woodland management technique of coppicing. He explains what coppicing is, what it involves and...

[View on web](#)

RETWEETS 24 FAVORITES 8

11:05 AM - 18 May 2015



**Forestry Commission**  
@ForestryCommEng

#WorldEnvironmentDay: time to reflect that forests are essential to life on Earth - we must use them wisely



RETWEETS 57 FAVORITES 38

1:16 PM - 5 Jun 2015

FAO Forestry and UN Environment



## Section 8: Social Media

### Oak Processionary Moth awareness raising

Led by @CraigHarrisonFC in London a series of photo graphics have been used as a messaging tool for increasing awareness of OPM and the development of caterpillars and their nests in spring and early summer.

Objective: increase reach of public awareness messages through consistent and co-ordinated approach

**@CraigHarrisonFC**

**19** tweets

Combined reach > **23,000** users

**1402** engagements

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

**202** retweets

**302** clicks to OPM webpage

### Top posts



# Section 8: Social Media

## #LondonTreeWeek

Craig Harrison led participation in #LondonTreeWeek social media activity by promoting London Tree & Woodland Awards, and engaging with facts and stats about London's urban forest.

Objective: to showcase FC as experts and leaders in promoting the role of trees and woodlands in London, and stimulate engagement

### @CraigHarrisonFC

23 tweets

Combined reach > **17,000** users

568 engagements

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

79 retweets

4 replies

79 favourites

## Top posts



## Section 9: Web Update

- Work to **reduce out of date or unused content** from the site continues with more than 17,000 old pdfs now deleted. All Welsh content, including images, was removed from the site in April, further improving search returns and the relevance and accuracy of content throughout the site.
- A project with FEE looked at improving our **search engine optimisation** (SEO) on the site to attract more traffic from engines like Google and Bing. The technical aspects of recommendations have almost been completed and work to better tune content has started with the introduction of new guidance for publishers and content owners. Benchmarking our search engine rankings against 6 similar organisations revealed our site to rank very favourably in all tests and top overall.
- Work to **redesign** website sections to bring them up to site standards continues. Most recently the Woodland Carbon Code, NFI, About Us and Buying and Selling sections have been completed.
- A project to provide a more focussed **web presence for FEE** commenced earlier in the year. Initial scoping work to determine user needs has been completed and the next stages will address identifying new content, areas for updating, and information and graphical design requirements.
- Following the finds of Asian chestnut gall wasp in June we quickly introduced two **e-publications** for wasp symptoms identification guides. These e-formats work on the common Apple, Android, Kindle devices and the guides can be downloaded and used remotely without cell or wifi signal. If feedback is positive we will introduce similar digital symptoms guides for other pests and diseases and investigate the possibility of creating versions for FC Blackberries.

## Section 9: Web Update

### Page views

Apr 1, 2015 - Jul 1, 2015

**4,485,655**

% of Total: 100.00% (4,485,655)



Apr 1, 2014 - Jul 1, 2014

**5,238,546**

% of Total: 100.00% (5,238,546)



### Total unique searches

Apr 1, 2015 - Jul 1, 2015

**6,180**

% of Total: 100.00% (6,180)



Apr 1, 2014 - Jul 1, 2014

**6,818**

% of Total: 100.00% (6,818)



### Visits

Apr 1, 2015 - Jul 1, 2015

**1,641,908**

% of Total: 100.00% (1,641,908)



Apr 1, 2014 - Jul 1, 2014

**1,839,105**

% of Total: 100.00% (1,839,105)



### Page/Sessions

Apr 1, 2015 - Jul 1, 2015

**2.73**

Avg for View: 2.73 (0.00%)



Apr 1, 2014 - Jul 1, 2014

**2.85**

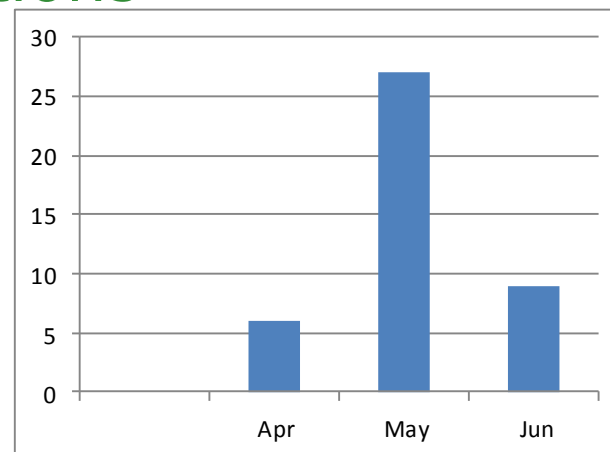
Avg for View: 2.85 (0.00%)



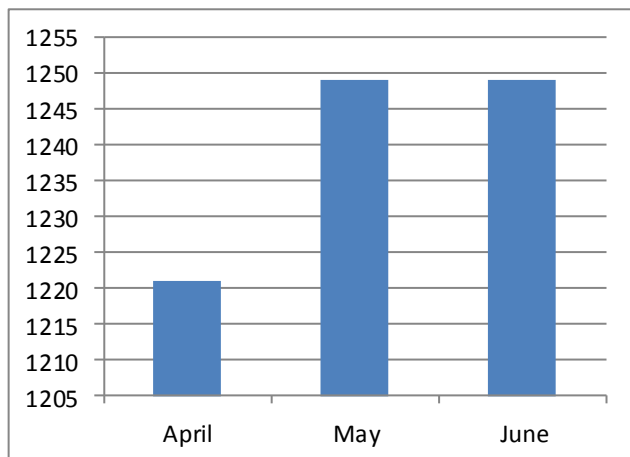
## Section 10: Internal Communications

### Most popular articles in Bark in this period:

- Oriental chestnut gall wasp confirm in the UK
- Ministers' praise for FC staff
- Norman Healy commended for expertise in firearms case



Yammer – number of new posts



Yammer – number registered on FC network

### Feedback: communications focus group (100 staff across FCE)

- 82% said that Ian G, Simon H or Richard G had visited their local office in the last year.
- 71% of staff in FS do not feel confident that the new Countryside Stewardship scheme will enable FS to achieve its vision (protect, improve, expand).
- Re. the recent FE staff workshops, 97% said they like hearing what others have to say & 86% are pleased they are being asked for their ideas. However 67% doubt their feedback will make any difference to what senior managers decide to do.
- 72% of staff in FE said they read all or most of Simon Hodgson's monthly emails.
- 19% of staff in FE have joined, or plan to join the innovation group.

## Section 10: Internal Communications

### Bark quarterly comparisons

Users

**23.25%**

1,304 vs 1,058



Pages / Session

**-11.53%**

1.33 vs 1.51



Avg. Session Duration

**-32.11%**

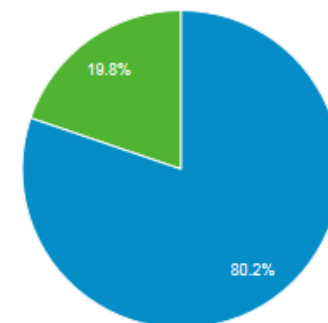
00:01:10 vs 00:01:43



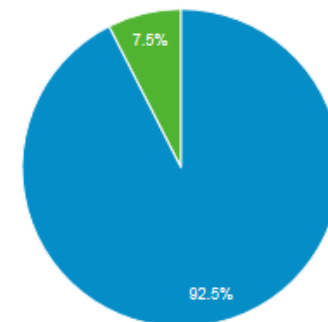
- **Unique users have increased 23.25% since this period in 2014 and 2015. This is positive as it means more people are choosing to read Bark.**
- **Pages per session and average session times have decreased, but this is not necessarily negative. People may be being more selective over what content they read. This emphasises the need to ensure a good split of topics and FE/ FS focused content.**

■ Returning Visitor ■ New Visitor

Apr 1, 2015 - Jun 30, 2015



Apr 1, 2014 - Jun 30, 2014

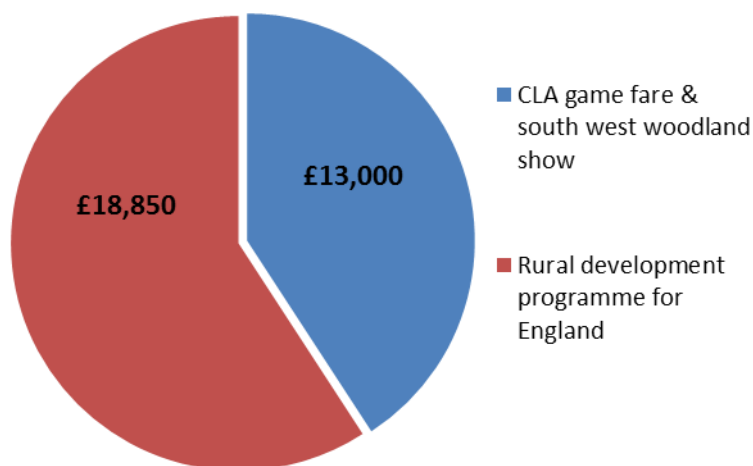


**New visitors up from 7.5% to 19.8% in 2015**

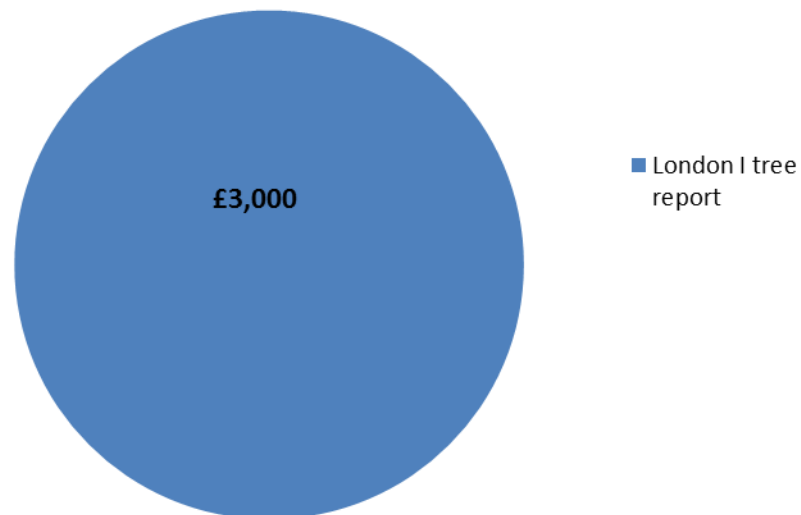


## Section 11: Spending Controls

May



June



**Pending approval and submitted to Defra**

Tree Health communications spending control - £60,000  
Woodlands into management - £35,000

## Section 12: Spending Controls – Outcomes

### Expected high level outcomes from the projects include:

#### Making woodlands work

- Help achieve 66% of woodlands in active management
- Increase the number of woodlands with a management plan
  - Woodland managers take more effective action to improve woodlands and make them more profitable
  - Woodland owners, managers, businesses work in partnership to invest, innovate and build capacity across

#### Countryside productivity scheme

- To generating the capacity to bring an additional 950,000 tonnes of green round wood to market
- To returning 100,000 ha of woodland to more active management
- To creating/sustaining some 700 Jobs in forestry and increasing business productivity

#### The I tree report will help build key themes

- The Urban forest needs action to remain resilient (benefits e.g. air quality)
- Let's work together to expand and improve our urban forest.
- We need to find innovative sources of new investment

#### Supporting messages

- More than 80% of people live in urban areas. This means it is the trees and woodlands in our towns and cities which enhance the lives of the most people, the most often
- Trees and woodlands provide clear benefits for local economies, local environments, and local people. They punch above their weight as part of our 'green infrastructure'.

## Section 13: Forward Look

- **CLA Game Fair** 31 July – We are sharing a stand in the forestry area of the Game Fair with other Defra bodies. Our focus will be resilience and will announce the partnership resilience accord, NE and RPA are confirmed and their focus will be Countryside Stewardship that we will support with forestry option advice;
- **South West Woodland Show** (10 & 11 September). We are working with the Area team and Confor to plan a breakfast briefing with Sir Harry and the Minister on the first day likely to focus on timber supply and a session to include Ian Gambles on wildlife management on the second day. We are exploring the potential for some media activity around the new Rural Development Programme and the Woodland Carbon Code;
- **Countryside Stewardship** – full offer opens to applicants in July;
- Forest Holidays is proposing Houghton Forest as a location for up to 75 cabins. August has been earmarked as a potential for the planning application;
- **Treefest** – annual summer event at Westonbirt in August;
- FC is currently showing an outdoor photography exhibition at Grizedale Forest called '**Guardians of the Areng Valley**' by Luke Duggleby, created through the inaugural Forestry Commission England Exhibition Award 2014 part of the Atkins CIWEM Environmental Photographer of the Year. We have been involved in this initiative for the last two years and this year will be touring Guardians of the Areng Valley to Bedgebury Pinetum in September as well as hosting the 2015 exhibitions;
- **Autumn colours** – August to October. A proactive media plan has been drafted to: increase media coverage; reinforce our role as the experts; and to drive visitors to the PFE. The plan contains three targeted media releases and a social media engagement plan.