

Quarterly Communications Report

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Section 1: Reactive Communications

The most significant issues for reactive media enquires were:

FE – feral wild boar, P. ramouram, Livia Drinkwater landslip

With a fatal collision on the M4, damage in the Forest of Dean, and reports of them killing lambs, this issue took a significant amount of time nationally and locally for communications and operational staffs as well as Defra and Defra family colleagues. Felling for P. ramorum in Cumbria also generated significant calls and coverage and the ongoing landslip issue engaged communications staff working with colleagues to keep the issue out of the media and preparing in case it did.

FS – squirrel policy, Chalara, unlicensed felling

The piece we worked with the Daily Mail on before Christmas was published shortly after which generated more media engagement. A subsequent conference by the European Squirrel Initiative reignited the issue. Updated chalara statistics were nationally picked up widely and we managed several media enquires about suspected unlicensed felling following contact with them by concerned members of the public.



Ash dieback spread throughout England: Number of woods affected has tripled in just two years to nearly 1,000

The Telegraph



Killer disease prompts tree felling in Cumbria



Section 2: Proactive communications

Forest Live

The additions of McBusted, Spandau Ballet, Sam Smith, The Vamps and Robert Plant have generated a great deal of media interest. 547 news items, with a total circulation of over 18 million, have been recorded for Forest Live from 1 January to 30 March 2015.

English Tourism Week

To tie in with English Tourism Week, we released a news story highlighting the 11% increase in visits to woods and forests in 2014 and planned a series of Twitter posts sharing positive messages about a variety of PFE success stories. The news release gained coverage in the Sunday People and the Express, with another feature opportunity being set up with the Telegraph Weekend magazine, whilst the Twitter activity gained approx. 12,000 impressions. The most popular tweet was about the range of wildlife work undertaken on the PFE.

Get Fit in the Forest

The 'Get fit in the forest' campaign gained good local press (especially in the North and the East) along with some national coverage. It was received well on social media, gaining 71,000 impressions on twitter. Engagement rates were good with the most popular tweet being a meme of a robin. This reached 11,828 users and was retweeted by @springwatch.

Forest Discovery Day

This year Forest Discovery Day was on the same weekend as World Forestry Day so we promoted both together for a whole weekend of learning about the forest. We released a news story that highlighted the day and the local activities on offer, and planned a series of Twitter posts sharing information on timber, wildlife and recreation. We also wrote two feature pieces for Land Love Magazine. These covered the importance of forests and how people can volunteer with the Forestry Commission, and 'a day in the life' of a ranger. In addition Land Love used our twitter handle #discoveryday to further promote the day. Twitter gained approx. 15,000 impressions. The most popular tweet was highlighting how people could learn about the importance of trees and woodlands.

NEWS

Spandau Ballet latest act announced for Westonbirt



1980s icons Spandau Ballet



Forestry Commission @ForestryCommEng · Mar 15
#ETW2015 fact: We run over 1000 #wildlife events each year, from bat walks & osprey days to bushcraft & star gazing pic.twitter.com/BPOak9o4a4



Forestry Commission @ForestryCommEng · Feb 11

What sounds have you heard out in the forest and woods this winter? #forestfit



A day in a life of a ranger

Posted 2015-03-21



It's World Forestry Day (21st March 2015) and Central Forest District community ranger, Amy Chandler, takes us behind the scenes to show us just what a ranger does

Section 2: Proactive communications

Forest Artworks

A spherical sculpture, titled 'Semiconductor' and based on one year's worth of Forest Research data showing the take-up and loss of carbon from trees was displayed at Alice Holt last autumn. The story featured in the Guardian and London Evening Standard, as well as a range of regional publications in Surrey.

Oak Processionary Moth

Local Government News magazine published a bespoke article about OPM by Ian Gambles. This led on the message that effective OPM management would require greater partnership working, especially with local authorities. The article was also submitted to *Local Government Chronicle* and *Municipal Journal* magazines, but they do not appear to have used it.

Woodland Carbon Code

Camargue has conducted market research and produced an interim report on the findings, which include the following encouraging conclusions:

- that the inability to trade UK-generated WCUs on international carbon markets is unlikely to be a deterrent to UK businesses from investing in them;
- that lack of awareness of the WCC opportunity, and lack of understanding of the core concepts of emissions offsetting and 'compensating for emissions' by woodland planting, are the greatest current impediments to business investment; and
- that once the above impediments are addressed, the corporate, social and PR benefits of WCC investment, coupled with the credibility which the FC's association provides, have potential to be persuasive to many businesses.

Chalara

The main development during the quarter was to initiate a change in the way in which we present the known distribution of Chalara on our website. We are moving from presenting a map and statistics of known sites to presenting hectads (10km x 10km OS grid squares) in which Chalara has been confirmed in at least one site in a wider-environment situation. We believe this is a more meaningful way to present known distribution, because it takes into account the possibility of other infection sites in the locality which have not yet been detected.

Section 3: In focus – Tree Health

Stop it – Wood Packaging Material Guidance

WPM Guidance infographic developed – already being used by members of the tree health team as part of the Asian Longhorn Beetle survey

Stakeholder engagement work to continue

Press release issued to the construction, timber and environment trade media – securing good coverage to date including:

- Don't let foreign pests into the country, Forestry Commission urges importers – Timber in Construction
- The Forestry Commission is urging importers to comply with regulations to protect Britain's trees – Pro Arb magazine
- Forestry Commission issues warnings to importers – TimberWeb
- Alien bugs sneaking into England in ship's cargo will destroy our woodland – Western Daily Press

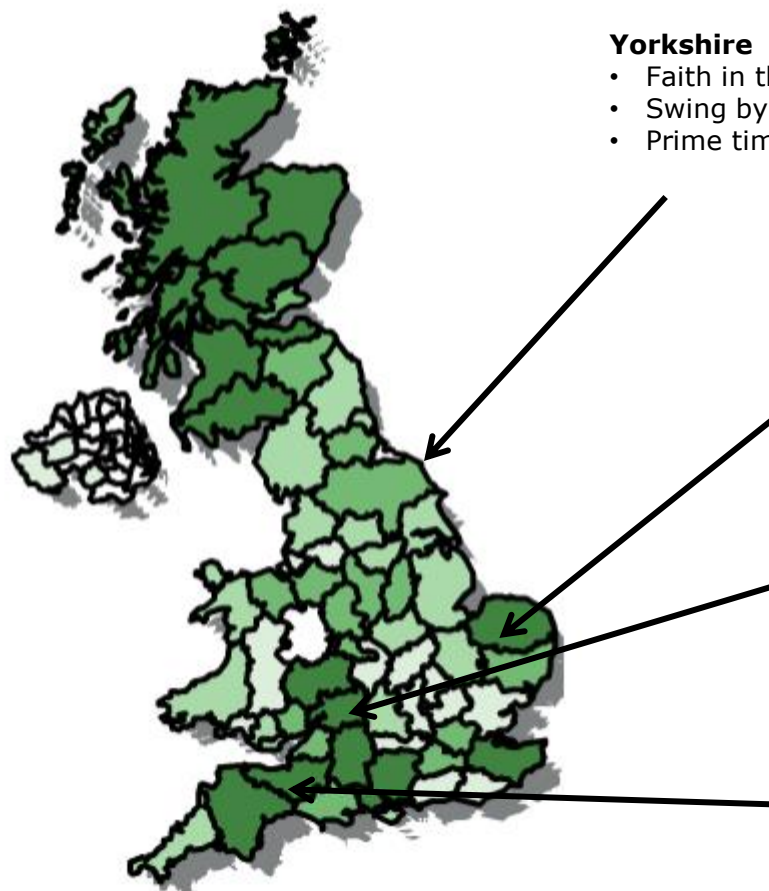
Biosecurity

- Perception surveys (email and stakeholder interviews) completed
- Key messages and comms plan being worked up, using results of survey to inform messaging and audience groups
- Internal events planned for autumn 2015



For further information contact the Forestry Commission's plant health service
www.forestry.gov.uk/woodtrade | email: plant.health@forestry.gsi.gov.uk | tel: 0300 067 5155

Section 4: District media engagement



Yorkshire

- Faith in the Forest
- Swing by for a day of full fun in the forest
- Prime time to walk your dog

East England

- Burn Christmas calories on local woodland trails
- Paloma Faith announced as latest act for Thetford Forest live line-up
- Go-ahead
- Tickets for Sam Smith show sell out in a flash

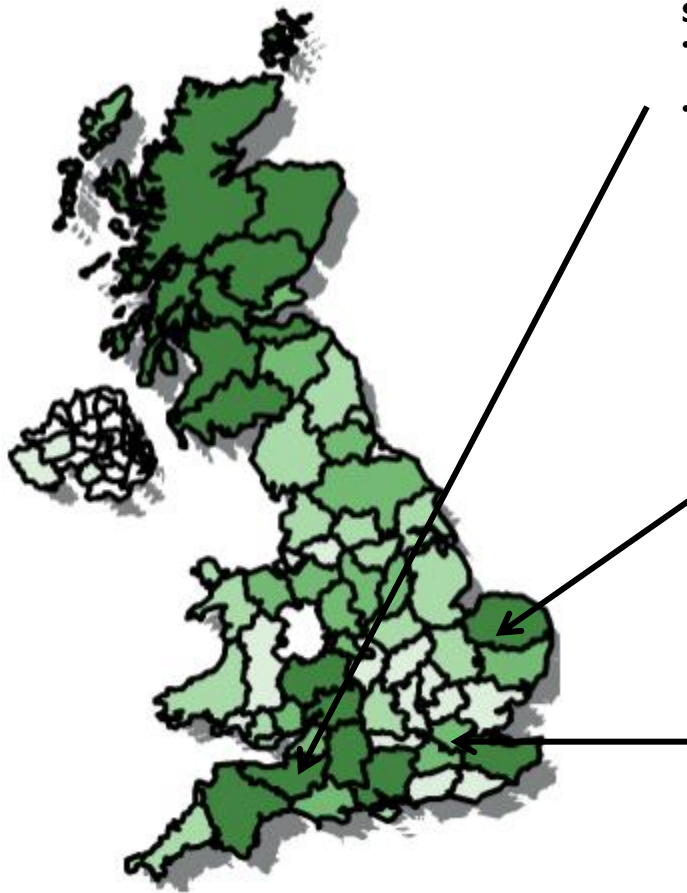
Westonbirt

- Major tourist attractions scoop up top gold awards
- Westonbirt Arboretum to put on a blooming good display
- Westonbirt Arboretum announces new sponsors for its tree top walkway
- Spandau Ballet to play at Forest Live gig in summer

West England

- Wild boar targeted after man killed
- English forests stamped with approval for sustainability
- The great escape – 2.93 billion visits to the coast and countryside

Section 5: Area media engagement



South West

- E-alert sent to all 6000+ SW contacts re woodland capital grants, tree health newsletter and forthcoming events
- FC supported recent conference 'Building with Wood' on innovative uses of wood products in construction, held at the new SW Energy Centre, S Devon. Approx. 50 delegates attended, presentations from variety of UK building projects and specialists.

East & East Midlands

- Neil Jarvis gave an excellent interview for BBC TV on Chalara. This was shown on BBC Look East and also BBC East
- The two events held for preliminary grants were a success with over 90 attending each event. Feedback was very positive with many questions posed
- A RDPE video was created by David Bole and Steve Scott with the aim to get more woodlands into management. This has already had over 200 views on YouTube

London

- i-tree report and launch: content has begun to be drafted and quotes have been gathered for design and publication work
- Funding bids are in place to pay for publications and events
- Craig Harrison is now on Twitter @craigharrison. This is already showing positive results in developing partner relationships and promoting events.
- Mayor of London's 20,000th Tree celebration

Section 6: Stakeholder engagement

I see @Gameandwildlife as a green washing agency for the shooting industry, waging war on predators in the name of "conservation"

George Monbiot

The National Forest Company (NFC) has launched a Grey Squirrel Strategy to address the threat posed by the increasing grey squirrel population to the millions of young trees it has planted since the early 1990s.

The National Forest Company

I welcome the fact that the Forestry Commission's enforcement action has been successful, and I applaud its exercise of these important powers. We take protection of our woodlands seriously, and no doubt the Commission will pursue the restocking requirements vigorously.

Secretary of State

The Nature and Wellbeing Act would put nature at the heart of how decisions are made about health, housing and other development, education, economic growth, flood resilience and every community. Local and national 'ecological networks' would be mapped out and created to put wildlife habitats back into the landscape.

The Wildlife Trusts

The National Trust will help to preserve Britain's public parks with a new strategy that focuses less on historic country houses and more on urban green spaces. Peter Nixon, the trust's director of conservation, compared the plan to save public parks to its "call to arms" in the 1950s to save great country houses, which were being demolished at the rate of one a week.

Peter Nixon, The National Trust

Section 7: Social Media



Twitter followers
 @ForestryCommEng Twitter followers: 11,074
 (up 16% on last quarter)
 @TreePestNews Twitter followers: 3331 (up
 7% on last quarter)



Forestry Commission Woods and Forests
 Facebook page likes: 14,272 (up 8% on last
 quarter)

Top posts this quarter



It's International Day of Forests - share what you love about forests, woodlands and trees with #IntForestDay



RETWEETS 120 FAVORITES 78

© 4:40 AM - 21 Mar 2015



What sounds have you heard out in the forest and woods this winter? #forestfit



RETWEETS 40 FAVORITES 27

10:51 AM - 11 Feb 2015



Forests can help tackle physical inactivity, says Forest Research report ow.ly/GH9tX #forestfit



RETWEETS 49 FAVORITES 30

8:45 AM - 3 Jan 2015

Section 7: Social Media

Woodland Capital Grants

As part of the launch of the new forestry grant offer we used two infographics to highlight successes of the 2007-2013 RDPE and information about the 2014-2020 RDPE offer

Objective: to seek stakeholder support and drive customers to web link for application details

Activity from **@ForestryCommEng** in launch week

13 tweets
193 retweets
 Tweets seen **45,453** times by users
174 users clicked link to our Countryside Stewardship webpage
12 people replied to tweets



Top posts



Why were these highest performing?

These were the first two headline tweets introducing the grants and so picked up and retweeted by key stakeholders

- Keyword 'Woodland Grants' mentioned 309 times on Twitter
- @DefraNature and @WoodlandTrust both tweeted independently (as well as retweeted) about grant offer

Comments included a customer applying!



Section 7: Social Media

#LoveourForests and #IntForestDay

We participated in UN's #IntForestDay and in the run up we shared facts and stats about the public forest estate and England's woods and forests using #LoveOurForests

Objective: to reach more people and stimulate engagement

@ForestryCommEng

#LoveOurForests

10 tweets

Estimated reach >**17,000** users

Engagement:

92 retweets

3 replies

58 favourites

#IntForestDay

12 tweets

Estimated reach >**24,736** users

Engagement:

206 retweets

17 replies

131 favourites

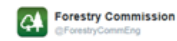
Top posts



England's ancient woodlands, those older than 400 years, are home to 79 endangered species #LoveOurForests



RETWEETS 44 FAVORITES 25
3:45 PM · 20 Mar 2015



More in the forest... England's forest sites, trails and activities #IntForestDay

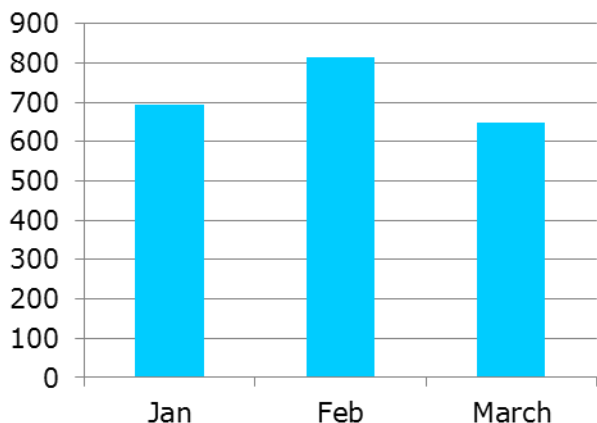


RETWEETS 12 FAVORITES 5
11:01 AM · 21 Mar 2015

Section 8: Web Update

- There has been a continuous push to slim line our website. The website no longer hosts any Welsh content and the team have started a process to clear all Welsh pages and images. Much Scottish content has now also been removed. Working with publishers the team have managed to delete over 17,000 pdfs from the site. This all helps navigation and greatly improves the quality of search returns.
- There has been a very useful project with FEE to look at how we can improve our search engine optimisation (SEO) on the site to attract more traffic from engines like Google and Bing. The team has also looked at improving our site traffic analytics. This will mean some significant changes to page designs etc, but also to how we choose and use the right keywords. Part of the project output is new guidance to publishers on how to maximise search returns.
- The new Community Biomass section has been completed. This was given a Ministerial launch by DECC in March.
- Traffic to our site rocketed on the announcement of the Sam Smith music gig. New servers coped admirably with little discernable impact on download times.
- The team have been working with FEE to produce new templates for publishing Forest Plans with automated maps and charts.
- A new publications database for the FR website was produced.

Section 9: Internal Communications



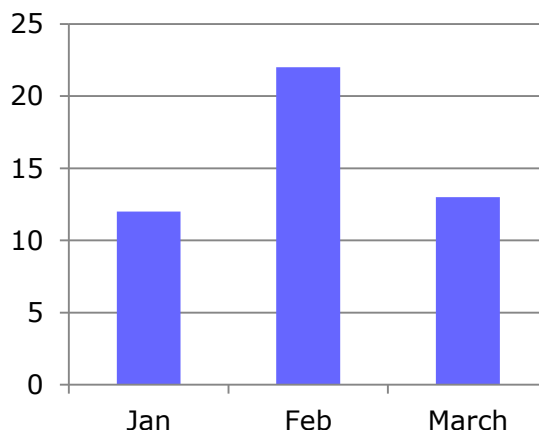
Bark- number of unique visitors

Most liked articles in Bark:

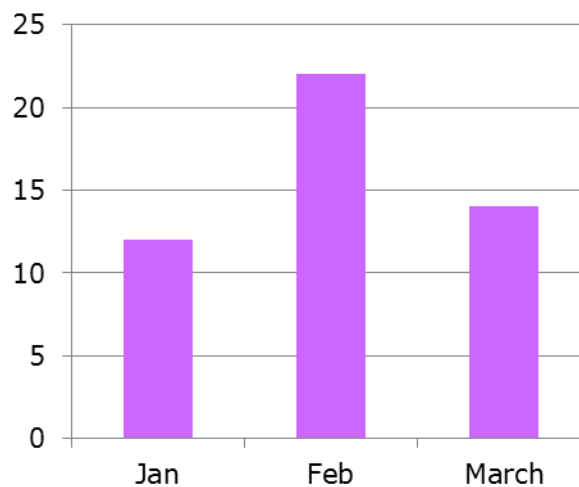
Introducing Steve Scott, Area Director, East and East Midlands

Juggling the needs of many in the New Forest

Area Direc-rockandroll-ter relives former glory



Yammer – number of new posts



Yammer – number of new members

Average time spent reading Bark: 00:57

The final response to the 'Reshaping FS' consultation was presented to staff in February. FS will now continue to work on implementing the decisions made.

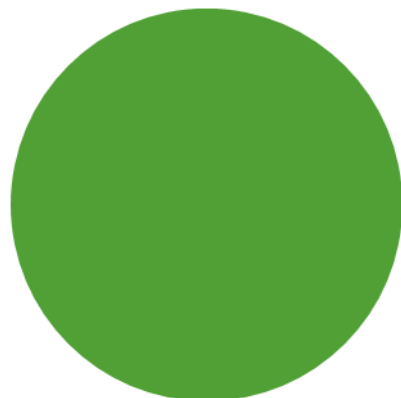
From March, FE staff have been participating in brand and identity workshops. The aim of the workshops is to get staff to think about our culture, what makes us unique and how we might need to evolve as we move towards the new PFE MO.

Ian Gambles has been attending National Office team meetings to discuss the National Office project and give Bristol staff the opportunity to comment and ask questions.

Section 10: Spending Controls

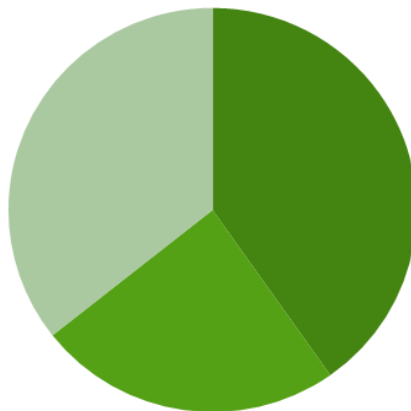
This quarter, £54,369+ VAT was approved via the spending controls process.

January



■ Woodland Carbon Code - £10,000

February

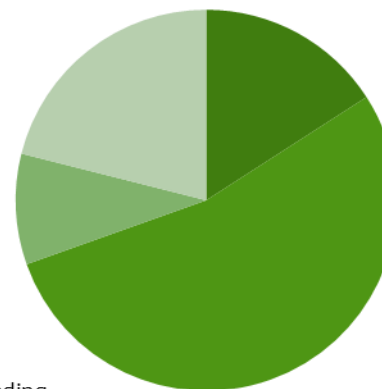


■ Preliminary Countryside Stewardship: Woodland Funding - £5,000

■ National Woodfuel Conference - £3,000

■ Rural Development Programme - £4,432

March



■ Woodlands into management - £5,074

■ Oak Processionary moth - £17,137

■ Grown in Britain - £3,000

■ Royal Development Programme - £6,726

Section 11: 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

Grown in Britain

- Increasing consumption of British hardwoods (20,000 tonnes above baseline)
- An inclusive wood culture movement, connecting more people with productively managed woodlands and home grown wood products
- 300 Grown in Britain on product licence agreements in place with retailers and suppliers

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

Section 11: Spending Controls – Outcomes

Rural Development Programme

- We will showcase examples of what has been achieved during the previous RDPE and use this to promote the benefits of future schemes.
- We want 100% of all our customers to know when the scheme is closing and what is happening to their grant scheme as a result and what they need to do.
- We want 90-100% of our customers to be clear about whom to contact on legacy grants.
- All staff involved in administering the legacy schemes will understand what advice they need to give in relation to this scheme and correctly refer customers to the Rural Payments staff for any other administrative requirements for the other schemes
- We want to demonstrate the potential for business growth via RDPE capital and revenue support, reaching at least 150 possible applicants by April 2015
- Woodland officers are clear about what their role is in promoting and implementing the preliminary grant offer
- Area teams are effectively working with Natural England to communicate messages about CS. Customers feel the process is clear and are able to access information about CS for either FC or NE.
- Defra are reassured that the Forestry Commission's communications are fully aligned with the RDPE milestones and are on message
- Customers will be able to successfully access and understand the forestry offer within Countryside Stewardship when it is made available

Section 12: Forward Look

Active Forests

As local Active Forests coordinators put their plans into action across the East, Central and North Districts, we will expect to see local marketing and communications on sporting activities available on these areas of the Public Forest Estate. National comms and marketing are supporting this work with templated comms plans and materials.

Forest Holidays

Proactive communications by Forest Holidays around the environmental, social and economic considerations for proposed new sites will launch alongside the submission of the planning application for Houghton, South Forest District.

Forest Art Works

Winner of the inaugural Forestry Commission England Exhibition Award (part of the annual Atkins CIWEM Environmental Photographer of the Year Awards), Luke Duggleby will exhibit his collection, Guardians of the Areng Valley, at Bedgebury from 22 April - September. Local and arts specific media relations will support this exhibition.

Tree Health

BBC1's *Countryfile* is expected to broadcast an edition with a forestry and woodland theme on Sunday 19 April. Part of the programme will look at pests and diseases, and we have helped their researchers with factual information. We were not able to be filmed or interviewed for the programme because of the election period restrictions on government communications, so it remains to be seen how much of our preferred messaging is used by other forestry stakeholders interviewed.

Oak Processionary Moth

It remains to be seen exactly when the OPM season will start (the exact timing of larvae emergence being weather-dependent) and whether it will occur before or after the end of the election period (when a new government has been formed). We have a duty to communicate the health risks to affected populations as best we can, and will need to prepare to discuss with Defra the nature of communications activity we can do if the season starts before a new government is formed.