



Grants & Regulations news

Protecting, expanding and improving England's woodlands

This month we want you to start preparing your woodland creation grant application now! Also we tell you more about the Woodland Carbon Guarantee scheme, there is also a reminder about our new online services and how to get involved in future policy making.

New Year New Woodland

Are you thinking of creating a new woodland or extending an existing woodland? Now is the time to apply for a Countryside Stewardship Woodland Creation grant!

In 2018 we had more applications for woodland creation grant than ever before, an increase in 40% from 2017. You can make your application at any time with our rolling window, but you should allow at least 5 months for your application to be processed. So submit your application now to get ready for the next planting season.

The sooner you start to think about your woodland the better, by planning in advance, you can reduce the changes likely to be needed during the application process, this will speed up your application's processing. If you are an agent working for a land owner, there are a number of things that you can do, firstly research the land on [Magic](#) and our new [Land Information Search](#) and ask the owner:

- what were the past land management options
- were there previous grant schemes on the land
- what are the land designations including Local Wildlife Sites, archaeology, Internal Drainage Board etc.

For larger proposals (over 10 hectares in area) you can apply for a [Woodland Creation Planning Grant](#) to help with this work.

Remember that your land will also need to be registered with the Rural Payment Agency (RPA). Before you apply, check that your land is registered correctly using the [Rural Payments service](#) to ensure your land parcels appear as you expect and are linked to your Single Business Identifier (SBI). To update this information complete an [RLE1 form](#) and send it to the RPA as soon as possible, otherwise this could delay your Countryside Stewardship application.

The [UK government has guaranteed](#) that any agreements where funding has been agreed before the end of 2020 will be funded for their full lifetime (even in a no-deal scenario).

Use our [woodland creation grant: Countryside Stewardship manual](#) on GOV.UK to help you with your application. We are currently updating the manual to reflect the government's guarantee of funding for Countryside Stewardship grants if they are agreed and signed before 31 December 2020.

Woodland Carbon Guarantee announced in England

Get a guaranteed income upon delivery of Woodland Carbon Units over the next 3 decades.

On the 29 October in the autumn [budget statement](#) it was announced that the government will set up a Woodland Carbon Guarantee scheme (WCaG) that will support the planting of around 10 million trees by purchasing up to £50 million of carbon credits for qualifying tree planting.

This is a great opportunity for landowners considering creating woodland in England over the next few years. Those eligible to enter into the scheme will benefit from a guaranteed income upon delivery of verified Woodland Carbon Units over the next 3 decades. Accessing the guarantee will require the woodland to be validated and verified to the Woodland Carbon Code (WCC).

The Woodland Carbon Guarantee is due to open in summer 2019 and in the spring we will be asking for stakeholder input to help us create and implement the most effective scheme to really stimulate the woodland carbon market in the UK.

Eligibility for the Woodland Carbon Guarantee is that the projects are truly additional, so projects that had already registered with the WCC or where planting had commenced by 29 October 2018 will not be able to apply. With respect to grant applications and grant agreements, the following eligibility requirements will apply:

- land for which a Countryside Stewardship (CS), Woodland Carbon Fund (WCF), or HS2 Woodland Fund final agreement had been signed by 29 October 2018 will not be able to apply for the guarantee
- new applications to CS, WCF and HS2 after 29 October 2018 will be eligible to apply to for the guarantee

Eligibility to apply for the Woodland Carbon Guarantee does not imply or confirm that Woodland Carbon Code additionality requirements will be met.

Consultation on Protecting and Enhancing England's

Trees and Woodlands

Read and respond to this consultation on providing greater protection for urban trees

On the 30 December 2018 Defra [launched a new consultation](#) on plans to create greater protections for trees in urban areas. The consultation seeks views on proposals to introduce 4 new measures designed to increase transparency and accountability in the process of felling street trees, and to strengthen the Forestry Commission's power to tackle illegal tree felling. Two of the measures introduce new duties on local authorities: a duty to consult on the felling of street trees, and a duty to report on tree felling and replanting. The third suggests the production of best practice guidance to support local authorities in drawing up, consulting on and publishing a Tree and Woodland Strategy. The fourth measure is intended to give the Forestry Commission more powers to tackle illegal tree felling and strengthen protection of wooded landscapes.

Please do take the time to read the consultation and [submit your views](#) by Thursday 28 February 2019.

"Hardwood timber on the up" say Grown in Britain

Active management of woodlands reaps many benefits for wildlife, access and recreation. Managed woodlands can also produce valuable timber.

Hardwoods are imported into the UK from across the globe, and yet we have a vast amount in our own, often un-managed, woods. Last week, Grown in Britain issued a press release which highlighted the rise in timber prices in 2018.

Chairman of the Forestry Commission, Sir Harry Studholme said:

“The rising prices of hardwood timber are fantastic news for woodland owners. Higher prices justify and encourage woodland management, and this management supports future production of this beautiful raw material. More than this, well-managed woodlands help plants and wildlife to flourish and store carbon to help tackle climate change. Grown in Britain are doing an exceptional job to develop the market for hardwood timber and realise these benefits.”

To read more on the rising prices, see www.growninbritain.org/hardwood-timber-say-grown-britain

Draft Environment (Principles and Governance) Bill clauses published

Defra published draft clauses on [environmental principles and governance](#) (as part of a broader Environment Bill to be introduced later this year) on 19 December, as well as an accompanying [policy paper](#). The draft clauses will enable government to set up a new, independent, statutory body that will hold government and public bodies to account on environmental standards once we exit the EU. It also introduces 9 environmental principles that will help protect the environment from damage and inform the development of government policy.

Great start for our Felling Licence Online service

Apply online for your felling licence and track your application wherever you are

The Felling Licence Online service launched in October 2018, making online applications available for everyone.

The Felling Licence Online service allows the applicant to create a map, complete an application online and track their application. This can all be viewed from the registered users dashboard, and once approved a pdf version of the licence downloaded or stored online for easy access anytime, anywhere. The map created can also be used for future felling applications and more properties or woodlands can be added to create a property portfolio. So far, we have had over 350 owners and agents register on Felling Licence Online and over 300 applications successfully submitted. For more information on how to apply please see our [guide: Apply online for a felling licence](#).

Have you used our new Forestry Commission map browser tool and Land Information Search yet?

In the summer we launched our new FC map browser (for use by customers in England), it has improved functionality and accessibility along with a new Land Information Search tool.

Access the browser and get guidance on how to use it with our [guide: Use the land information search](#).

What can I use the map browser and Land Information Search for?

The map browser is a public information tool that allows you to view data layers published by the Forestry Commission. You can see how they interact with the area of land you have an interest in, and can identify various agreements for forestry and woodland management activity that has been approved. The Land Information Search allows all of this information to be put into a report that you can print and save.

Who should use the map browser?

If you are planning to engage in forestry activities, the map browser will aid the scoring of targeted grant schemes, and help with stakeholder engagement when at the planning stage.

You should also use the map browser if you have an interest in a forestry or woodland management activity in your area and want reassurance that the work is legitimate.

Don't forget to use www.MAGIC.gov.uk alongside the FC map browser, as not all forestry data layers of information are available (due to licencing and data sharing).

What can the map browser do for me?

There are lots of functions within the map browser that can help you with your mapping needs! These include:

- creating (drawing and measuring) new features or boundaries on an Ordnance Survey map backdrop, and printing those new features as part of a new PDF map
- identifying approved (current and legacy) grant schemes and felling permissions
- searching against the published data layers to see what features or designations of interest influence a particular area of land
- producing a constraints check report against a proposal area, as evidence that you have carried out these basic checks
- engaging with stakeholders once you have assessed the results of a LIS check linking to the FC Map Request Service

Is there any guidance on how to use the FC map browser?

We have put together the following guidance to help you use the map browser and get the most out of its functionality: [Forestry Commission map browser with Land Information Search: operations note 48](#).

Updates to Forestry Commission email address

Please change the contact details that you have for our staff

Over the last few months we have been making some changes to our email addresses, all of our staff now have new email addresses and although your emails to our old addresses are being forwarded this will not continue forever, so please update your contacts for our staff, our email addresses now end in @forestrycommission.gov.uk

Contact details are available on [GOV.UK](#)

If you have any questions, please contact us:

Email:
GRNationalTeam@forestrycommission.gov.uk

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