

# Woodland Carbon Guarantee

## Project developer, Brown & Co

### Key facts

**The Woodland Carbon Guarantee aims to help accelerate woodland planting rates and develop the domestic market for woodland carbon for the permanent removal of carbon from the atmosphere.**

- The Guarantee offers landowners the option to sell their captured carbon in the form of verified carbon credits, called Woodland Carbon Units (WCUs).
- Woodland creation projects accepted into the Woodland Carbon Guarantee have the option to sell these WCUs to the government every 5 or 10 years up to 2055/56. The government will buy the WCUs for an agreed guaranteed price that is index-linked for the life of the contract. You can still choose to sell the carbon credits on the open market at any time.
- The Woodland Carbon Guarantee is open to land managers who are owner occupiers, tenants, landlords and licensors, as long as they have control of the land and all the activities needed to meet the obligations of the Guarantee for the full duration of the contract.
- Woodland Carbon Guarantee applications may be made alongside applications for woodland creation grants.

Following the first successful Woodland Carbon Guarantee auction we met with Greg Beeton, Divisional Partner & Agricultural Business Consultant from project developer Brown & Co to talk about the scheme.

He told us, "For both myself on a personal level and Brown & Co as a business we have motivations to improve the environment and natural capital stocks as an integral part of building business incomes and resilience. Think woodland, water and peatland to name a few of those natural capital stocks. Furthermore, we continually aim to encourage our landowning client base to 'move with the times' by being open and receptive to new opportunities available and adopting new working practices. This is especially important as the support system for landowners is ever evolving."

Greg explained that as a project developer they seek out those opportunities for their landowning clients. He said, "The Woodland Carbon Guarantee is a prime example of this. It has been the first tangible opportunity to allow landowners who have an interest in climate change to proactively engage with a carbon initiative."



The planting of new woodland will help the Mair family develop a wildlife and education hub for the local community.

Brown & Co work with many landowners, enabling them to raise awareness of the Woodland Carbon Guarantee amongst their network. Additionally, they were also able to identify specific landowners that could potentially benefit from the guarantee.

He said, "The financial returns of the scheme were a strong nudge for our landowning clients to take that step, commit to woodland creation and subsequent carbon sequestration through the scheme, although it was never the primary motivation."

"There were a range of reasons why the scheme appealed to our clients, including the potential for biodiversity benefits, business driven land use change, the desire to contribute to the challenge of tackling climate change and improving the amenity of their land."

We heard from Catherine & John Mair who were successful in the first auction:

"The Mair family have farmed land in the Fens for almost 60 years through three generations. We have increasingly realised that traditional agriculture practices have become less sustainable, both financially and environmentally, and other options need to be evaluated for future generations. A particular challenge on parts of our farm has been the blackgrass burden and the costs and effectiveness of control. In addition, soil types of some field areas, with inconsistent weather patterns, have brought us to question the ability of growing a financially viable cereal crop."

"The opportunity to do something different with these land areas, while taking part in a new initiative to address the increasing climate challenge, proved very exciting. Growing woodland through a carbon sequestration project was a main driver but also allows us to develop an environmentally sustainable wildlife and education hub for the local community."

The Woodland Carbon Guarantee scheme is open to a range of land managers, both through direct applications or via a project developer. Greg reflected on the process itself and why others might consider the scheme.

"I would certainly encourage landowners to consider the many benefits of the Woodland Carbon Guarantee. The support provided throughout by the Forestry Commission team was fantastic."

"We were excited to see that eight of our clients were successful in the first auction earlier this year and will now be able to capitalise on the support that the scheme provides. In time their bids will result in approximately 82 hectares of new woodland creation."

He added, "Landowners are increasingly needing to look at the potential their land has for different income streams in the future, woodland creation is one of those options. As the carbon market develops the returns associated with these options should provide viable income streams. However, this is not a one size fits all and each landowner will need to consider their individual situation, but the Woodland Carbon Guarantee could be part of a range of long term income streams that can complement more traditional farming incomes."

**For more information about the Woodland Carbon Guarantee visit:** [www.gov.uk/guidance/woodland-carbon-guarantee](http://www.gov.uk/guidance/woodland-carbon-guarantee)



Blackgrass and arable crops on Catherine & John Mair's farm

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[gov.uk/government/organisations/forestry-commission](http://gov.uk/government/organisations/forestry-commission)

