

Woodland Carbon Guarantee case studies

- **Webbs Farm** (T. Earey & Son)
- **Lackford Estate** (D.W.P. Gough Co Ltd)

Project developer: Brown & Co



What is the Woodland Carbon Guarantee?

The Woodland Carbon Guarantee (WCaG) 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 Woodland Carbon Guarantee offers land managers 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.

"The Woodland Carbon Guarantee delivers the long-term income security required to provide landowners with the confidence to plant woodland. The reverse auction process is of interest to landowners as it isn't typical of other agri-environment schemes which tend to have fixed payment rates."

William Higgins, Brown & Co Project Developers





Webbs Farm (T. Earey & Son)

T. Earey & Son is an arable business based at Webbs Farm in Essex. The primary objective for woodland creation was to increase the financial return on the holding through the sale of carbon units. The new native woodland also provided the potential ability to accommodate future income diversification projects such as eco-tourism and sustainable glamping.

The former arable land selected for planting was poor-quality with limited yields and significant operational constraints. The low performing nature of the land meant that the opportunity costs were limited.

In February 2020, T. Earey & Son's project was successful in a Woodland Carbon Guarantee auction, which provided the long-term financial certainty to enable them to plant their native broadleaf woodland in December 2022.

The Woodland Carbon Guarantee can act as a primary driver on poorer performing areas of land where alternative income opportunities are limited, as well as an added incentive where woodland is being established for other objectives such as increased biodiversity and local nature recovery.

Key facts

- **Site:** Braintree, Essex
- **Size:** 3 ha
- **Species:** predominantly: Common/ Pedunculate Oak, Hornbeam, Rauli Beech, Silver Birch, Small Leaved Lime, Scots Pine and Wild Cherry
- **Successful WCaG auction:** February 2020
- **Date planted:** December 2022

Woodland Carbon Guarantee helps to de-risk changing land use

The Woodland Carbon Guarantee ensures long term certainty for land managers and farmers, providing a guaranteed price for WCUs, alongside index-linking, to make it a worthwhile long-term investment.

Brown & Co are a project developer that work with many landowners across England, enabling them to raise awareness of the Woodland Carbon Guarantee amongst their network and the benefits it can provide for woodland creation projects.





We spoke with William Higgins, Agricultural Business Consultant at Brown & Co on some of the key motivators for landowners in participating in a WCaG auction.

He told us, "Securing a guaranteed future baseline price is key for landowners in de-risking what is a permanent land use change. The Woodland Carbon Guarantee provides an income projection which is vital in benchmarking against other income options."

"The Woodland Carbon Guarantee provides the opportunity for landowners to secure a higher price by selling units through the voluntary market, adding an element of competition, with the security of having a backstop and selling to government for the price agreed at auction. The WCaG is also compatible with other grant schemes such as the England Woodland Creation Offer (EWCO) to cover the capital cost of establishment, which is essential."



Lackford Estate (D.W.P. Gough Co Ltd)

Lackford Estate in East Anglia stretches to some c.1,130ha with a rich history in agriculture and game-driven shooting. Hosting in excess of 50 shoots each season, the primary motivation for woodland creation on the estate was to provide enhancements to the shoot through diversification of habitats.


Planting on former arable ground allowed for the adjoining of existing shelter belts to increase wildlife connectivity and biodiversity, as well as replace the requirement to establish maize cover.

The Woodland Carbon Guarantee acted as a catalyst for progressing with the project, providing a financial incentive in addition to the amenity value. It also provided the landowners with the confidence to apply for a larger area of planting and scale up the project.

The carbon calculations influenced the choice of species mix and stocking density, with an interest in maximising sequestration rates and ensuring the woodland could deliver a level of carbon units early on in the project life cycle.

Young, fast-growing trees will capture carbon dioxide at a quicker rate, while mature trees can act as carbon stores for hundreds of years. Appropriate tree species and woodland management techniques are needed to realise these carbon benefits.

Key facts

- **Site:** Bury St Edmunds, Suffolk
 - **Size:** 6 ha
 - **Species:** predominantly: Sessile Oak, Common/Pedunculate Oak, Scots Pine, Silver Birch, Beech, Small Leaved Lime
 - **Successful WCaG auction:** February 2020
 - **Date planted:** December 2021
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For more information about the Woodland Carbon Guarantee, visit: www.gov.uk/guidance/woodland-carbon-guarantee