

# Plant your future

## The case for trees





A large, leafy tree stands in a green field. In the background, there is a stone barn with a wooden door. Two sheep are grazing in the field. The sky is overcast with grey clouds.

## There's more to trees than meets the eye

Trees have far-reaching benefits for you, your land, the environment and for future generations.

By planting the right tree in the right place for the right reason, coupled with financial support and expert advice, woodland can help you realise the true potential of your land.



# The benefits for your business



## Get paid for planting trees on your land

Financial support is available through Forestry Commission grants and via our partners and other woodland creation organisations.

**Our flagship scheme, the England Woodland Creation Offer**, covers standard capital costs and annual maintenance payments as your woodland establishes, with additional stackable payments when delivering wider benefits to society, nature

recovery, and the environment. Applicants can also retain Basic Payment Scheme payments.

The scheme supports a range of woodland types and sizes, starting from just one hectare per application and per block.

Find more information on **grants and available support**.

## Timber and woodfuel

Well-managed woodlands can provide viable income generation opportunities. With timber in high demand, you could benefit from reliable short or long-term revenue streams: planting and harvesting fast-growing trees that can be coppiced or felled on a frequent cycle results in a quicker turnover but may be less profitable over time than slower-growing high-quality timber. Local woodfuel production can provide efficient energy savings to heat buildings or give you an income from sales. There are also other wood products to consider, such as the production of Christmas trees, wood for construction and furniture, as well as coppice materials for wood chippings and temporary fencing.

Trees are subject to a range of tax reliefs, including:

- a growing timber crop is exempt from Capital Gains Tax (but not the land it grows on), where managed as a commercial investment
- income from the sale of timber from the ownership of commercial woodlands is exempt from income and corporation tax
- under Woodlands Relief the value of woodland can be exempted from inheritance tax

We would always recommend that you seek independent tax advice.

## Carbon offsetting

Registering with the **Woodland Carbon Code** allows you to sell carbon units for every tonne of carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) sequestered as early as five years after planting, validating and verifying your woodland through the code. This could help you to generate revenue through their sale, or closer to home – offset your business' carbon emissions.

## Recreation

Woodlands offer numerous recreation opportunities, from running game shoots to glamping, and forest schools to thrill-seeking adventure courses. Under the **England Woodland Creation Offer** you can also receive additional stackable payments (on top of capital costs) for providing public access to your woodland.

# The benefits for your land



## Improve your land

Woodland creation as part of an integrated land use model can provide multiple indirect benefits, helping you to:

- **provide a natural form of flood management and improve water quality** – woodland in the right place helps slow run-off from your land as well as helping to reduce water pollution in our streams, rivers and lakes. You could also receive additional Forestry Commission stackable payments for improving water quality, flood mitigation and creating woodland along rivers on your land
- **manage soil and nutrient losses** – planting woodland between the field edge and a river can reduce sediment run-off by 90-100%, nutrient losses by 20-80%, and reduce pesticide loss in run-off by 60-100%
- **reduce erosion** – planting trees along rivers can help to stabilise the riverbank and prevent landslips
- **cut pollution** – planting woodland shelterbelts around your farm lowers windspeed and can reduce spray drift up to 90%, as well as helping to capture pesticide run-off and ammonia released from livestock units. The [England Woodland Creation Offer](#) supports planting shelterbelts down to 10 metres in width
- **provide shelter** – for livestock and provide an alternative source of food for pollinators
- **increase productivity** – by combining trees with crops and livestock for healthier soil, which could lead to more sustainable yields, all of which can benefit biodiversity and better utilise your land

“

It's a win-win situation for us with planting trees.

– Steve Ramshaw, Monkridge Hill Farm

”





# The benefits for your local community

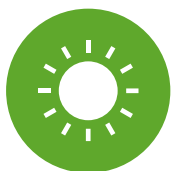


## Support health and well-being

Scientific studies around the world have shown that forests can improve individuals' physical and mental health, as well as their social well-being.

Forests can even help lower blood pressure, pulse rate, and reduce stress levels. If everyone in England had access to good quality green spaces this could save the NHS £2.1 billion every year in treatment costs.

Providing public access to your woodland offers people near you somewhere to come together, and could also make you eligible for additional Forestry Commission stackable payments for public access, and further stackable payments for being close to settlements. You can also get a contribution towards the cost of installing items such as benches, waymarkers and footpaths that support recreation in your woodland.



## Improve air quality

Woodlands absorb harmful gases such as carbon dioxide, nitrogen oxide, ammonia, and sulphur dioxide, improving air quality for you and your local community.





# The benefits for nature and the environment



## Boost biodiversity

Woodlands are home to a wealth of wildlife, from red squirrels to goldcrests, and create a habitat for a rich array of plant and fungi species. Making smaller woodlands bigger or connecting existing woodlands with one another can help connect habitats and encourage wildlife corridors, boosting nature recovery and enabling species to adapt to an ever-changing climate. You could receive additional Forestry Commission stackable payments for contributing to nature recovery with new woodland in the right place and with the right features.

Woodland along rivers and streams provides shade to keep rivers cool for fish and other aquatic life, and leaves, twigs and branches that fall into rivers and streams are also beneficial for plants, invertebrates, and fish. You could receive additional Forestry Commission stackable payments for creating riparian woodland.



## Woodlands can only deliver benefits if they are actively managed – which will also help keep them healthy and resilient





## Natural carbon capture

Woodlands play an important role in addressing climate change. Trees act as a natural 'carbon sink' by removing and storing carbon dioxide from the atmosphere. By planting more trees, and protecting existing woodlands, together, we can help counteract some of the harmful effects of greenhouse gas emissions. You could earn additional long-term income by selling the carbon units captured by your woodland.



## Reduce the risk of flooding

Creating woodland in the right places can slow the flow of water and reduce flood peaks by up to 65%. Upland woodland can increase water storage by intercepting, using and recycling more rainwater than grassland, and woodland on a river's floodplain can slow the flow of floodwater – and reduce the risk of floods in communities. You could receive additional Forestry Commission stackable payments for creating woodland that can reduce flood risk.



## How to apply for Forestry Commission funding

Visit: [gov.uk/forestry/tree-planting-overview](https://gov.uk/forestry/tree-planting-overview)

For further support and advice, speak to your local [Woodland Creation Team](#).

“ Creating a woodland means so much more to me than just putting trees in the ground; we're creating a beautiful place for the future; for the people and the wildlife. I won't see this woodland fully mature, but that doesn't matter to me – it's taking the first step that matters. ”

– Ian Jack, Head Forester, Lowther Estate



# Why plant trees now?



## Forestry Commission Grants

There is a range of support and funding available from the Forestry Commission and other organisations, designed to help make woodland creation a reality for you.

### **Woodland Creation Planning Grant (WCPG):**

Contributes towards the costs of designing your new woodland in line with the UK Forestry Standard, and offers you access to expert advice from your local Forestry Commission Woodland Creation Team to assist in the production of your plan.

### **England Woodland Creation Offer (EWCO):**

Covers standard capital costs and annual maintenance payments as your woodland establishes, with additional stackable payments when delivering wider benefits to society, nature recovery, and the environment. Applicants can also retain Basic Payment Scheme payments and receive a contribution towards the costs of access infrastructure.

### **Woodland Carbon Code (WCC):**

The WCC is the UK's voluntary carbon standard for woodland creation projects. If you can demonstrate that you can meet this standard and can show that your project wouldn't otherwise proceed without carbon income, then you can sell the carbon sequestered in your woodland in the form of Woodland Carbon Units.

### **Woodland Carbon Guarantee (WCaG):**

Provides the option to sell your captured CO<sub>2</sub> to the government for a guaranteed, index-linked price every five or 10 years up to 2055/56 – leaving you free to sell them on the private market if you prefer.

### **Forestry England Woodland Partnership:**

A leasehold scheme offering commercial rent to landowners for 60 to 120 years, with Forestry England responsible for designing, planting, and managing your woodland.

Read more about available [\*\*woodland creation grants.\*\*](#)

## Get paid for planting trees on your land

Grants cover woodland design, capital costs, annual maintenance payments, and infrastructure installation.



## TOP TIP

Upfront guidance and support on grant applications is available. Contact the Forestry Commission and other advice providers before planting any trees.



## Partner funding opportunities

There are various financial incentives available via our partners and other woodland creation organisations. Discover which grant is most suitable for you by visiting the relevant partner website.

### **England's Community Forests Trees for Climate Fund:**

Expert support and up to 100% flexible and bespoke grant funding for up to 15 years. Open to all landowners within any Community Forest area.

### **The National Forest:**

Generous grants and support for tree planting, forest creation and habitat management in the Midlands, available to landowners within the 200 square miles of the National Forest. Grant schemes offer funding to cover design, planning and up to 100% of implementation costs.

### **Northern Forest:**

A partnership between the Woodland Trust, four Community Forests – Mersey Forest, Manchester City of Trees, White Rose Forest, Humber Forest – and the Community Forest Trust, with funding from the government's Nature for Climate Fund. You can secure up to 100% of the capital costs of woodland design, planning and creation and a generous maintenance budget.

### **Woodland Trust:**

Offers three national schemes: MOREwoods and MOREhedges covering up to 75% of the costs for a range of woodland and hedgerow creation, starting from 1.25 acres or 100 metres of new hedging, and Trees for Your Farm, funding up to 100% of costs for bespoke agroforestry schemes.





## Planning and management is critical

**Woodlands must be carefully planned** – and managed for the long term – to deliver benefits to you and society.

The process of designing a new woodland brings together your management objectives, the site's landscape and suitability, environmental, economic, and social factors into a plan to make your woodland design sustainable and compliant with the UK Forestry Standard (UKFS). In your plan you must:

- set out your objectives for the new woodland
- describe the site's context, features, constraints, and opportunities
- explain how your plan responds to these factors, using gathered evidence and UKFS good practice guidelines
- reflect information that arose during your engagement with stakeholders
- provide sufficient information for an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) if required
- take account of the eligibility requirements of any grant you may wish to apply for

Remember, by creating woodland you are making a commitment to ongoing woodland management over many decades to come. To achieve your objectives, you should be prepared to actively manage the trees that you plant today into the future.



“ I didn't realise how important rides and glades were to biodiversity and sustainability, but these are an integral part of the design and I'm on a learning curve as to how to manage these as the trees grow. ”

– David Harding, Avon Wood





## Timing matters

To give trees the best possible start it's important to plant at the right time of year, using the most appropriate planting techniques. You should plant the trees between November and March, when trees are dormant and are less likely to get damaged.

Be aware that the planning and design process can take some time, and you should kickstart your woodland plans well in advance of when you hope to plant trees.

## Right tree, right place, for the right reasons

New woodlands must integrate into and enhance our landscapes, considering any existing features, land use and habitats. From soils and water to the historic environment and biodiversity, the UK Forestry Standard provides a solid framework to ensure the right tree is planted in the right place.







## Consider biosecurity

It's important to source trees from biosecure stock to reduce the risk of spreading pests and diseases, and to ensure a thriving and resilient woodland. Where possible, get your plants from nurseries with clear plant health management standards in place, for example, nurseries with **Plant Healthy certification** or similar.



## Trees need protection

To ensure successful establishment of your woodland, adequate long-term protection is needed from rabbits, squirrels, and deer. Tree shelters, guards or fencing must be considered as part of the planning process.







## Diversity is vital

A diversity of tree species – sourced from biosecure stock – is essential to ensure a resilient woodland that can deliver a wide range of benefits, with a diverse structure including open space. Both broadleaf and conifer species can create a thriving local ecosystem, with different flora and fauna favouring different habitats. Woodland resilience is also essential if trees and forests are to adapt to changing climates and weather events.

## Trees sequester carbon at different rates

Conifer trees grow more quickly and therefore absorb carbon dioxide at a faster rate than broadleaf woodlands. However, broadleaf woodland can offer a larger carbon store in the long run. Woods can also store more carbon if managed with a continuous cover forestry regime. It's important to consider appropriate species selection and woodland management techniques to realise carbon benefits.

If you want to benefit from the sale of carbon units or use them to offset your own business' emissions, you will need to register your woodland and its potential carbon capture with the [\*\*Woodland Carbon Code\*\*](#).



## Felling trees is good for woodland management

The felling of trees is a normal and important aspect of good woodland management. It helps to sustain a healthy woodland condition by letting in light and allowing a variety of wildlife to thrive under the forest canopy. A felling licence must be obtained (in most cases) before you start any work on felling live trees. Sustainable forest management promotes healthier and more resilient woodlands, strengthening biosecurity, and providing crucial habitats for nature.

“ I've always been very fond of that Kenyan proverb – remember the land is not given to you by your ancestors, it is lent to you by your children.

– John Anderson, Little Harle Estate ”



## How to find out more

Discover [further guidance](#) on woodland creation and information on grants and available support.





# 3 steps towards woodland creation



## Consider opportunities for woodland creation on your land

You may wish to integrate trees on your land, plant trees on under-utilised areas, or create a new block of woodland or expand an existing woodland. Make the most of what your land can offer you, depending on your existing land use model.



## Have clear objectives for your woodland

Having clear objectives will help to inform your woodland design and the most suitable funding for you.



## Speak to your local Woodland Creation Team or one of our partners

Expert support is on hand to discuss how to plan your woodland and apply for available funding.



### TOP TIP

Read [A guide to planning new woodland in England](#).



The best time to plant a tree was 20 years ago.  
The second-best time is now.

“


I take great pleasure from helping to create woodland and would encourage others to do it.


– Mr Howes, Cherryrock Farm, Bristol

”

Discover [further guidance](#) on woodland creation and information on grants and available support.

[forestrycommission.blog.gov.uk](https://forestrycommission.blog.gov.uk)  
[gov.uk/forestrycommission](https://gov.uk/forestrycommission)

 [@ForestryComm](https://twitter.com/ForestryComm)

 [Forestry Commission](https://www.youtube.com/ForestryCommission)

 **Forestry Commission**

Published by Forestry Commission,  
© Crown Copyright 2023.

References:

Farmers Weekly, 2016. 9 reasons to plant trees on your land [news article].  
Forestry Commission, 2011. Woodland for reducing agricultural diffuse pollution [report].  
Environment Agency, 2011. Environment Agency and Forestry Commission – Woodland for Water summary report [report].  
Environment Agency, 2020. Environment Agency Forest Research and James Hutton Institute – 3D buffer strips – designed to deliver more for the environment [report].  
Environment Agency, 2020. Investing in nature is an investment in the NHS, says Environment Agency Chief Executive [press release].

All images owned by Forestry Commission with the exception of:

Cover: © kodachrome25 / Getty Images  
Page 4: © Solstock / Getty Images  
Page 5: © SolStock via E+ / Getty Images  
Page 6 (squirrel): © Forestry England  
Page 13: © Sander Meertins / Getty Images

