



WOODLAND  
TRUST

# A Bold Vision for England's Forests

[woodlandtrust.org.uk](http://woodlandtrust.org.uk)

## **A Bold Vision for England's Forests**

After the unprecedented public outpouring of feeling in support of England's forests, the Government is now in listening mode.

So what do we need to tell them?

### **Let's make sure that:**

- Our ancient woods are fully protected
- New woods are created to provide a complete life support system for people and wildlife
- Public support for trees and woods inspires a new connection with the natural world.

### **Our objectives:**

- New and strengthened forms of protection for ancient woodland (it's astounding that there are no protective legal designations to prevent damage and development for 85% of this irreplaceable habitat, our equivalent of the rainforests)
- A government commitment to restore all 35,000 hectares of planted ancient woods in their ownership (their restoration would be one of the most important contributions to nature conservation in England)
- A government commitment to woodland creation and a target of 15,000ha per annum in the Natural Environment White Paper (planting rates in England declined from 6,500ha in 1992 to just 2,300ha in 2010 and with only 8% of England covered by forests, we are almost at the bottom of the European league table on forest cover)
- Every child should have the chance to plant a tree as part of their education.



## A Bold Vision for England's Forests

### On protection:

- The government needs to introduce a transparent, annually reported figure for forest loss alongside those it already reports on woodland creation: this should be supported by a requirement of planning authorities to report to the Forestry Commission any development which damages or destroys ancient woodland and Trees of Special Interest (TSIs)
- The government should not let national planning policy on ancient woodland and trees contained in planning policy statement no. 9 on biodiversity be diluted as part of current proposals to streamline planning guidance and should review permitted development rights in woodland
- The Forestry Commission should be a statutory consultee on all planning applications affecting ancient woodland and it should have powers to object as well as comment on them
- Increase the fines for illegal felling, reduce the limit for felling without licenses to 5m<sup>3</sup> per year and prosecute illegal woodland and tree fellers
- Forestry Commission grants improved further to help private woodland owners restore planted ancient woods
- Forestry Commission should be required to implement and set up a transparent publically available reporting process on its performance in restoring planted ancient woods it owns
- No planted ancient woodland sites in public ownership should be sold in future unless they are restored
- Any future disposals must include conditions in the lease transfer or sale requiring any current levels of provision for regular access (above the CROW Act minimum) to be maintained
- Creation of a new form of conservation protection in the form of a covenant which owners can apply to woodland they wish to see protected after it is sold
- More effective and better funded biosecurity measures to prevent the spread of tree diseases and to permit proper research.



## A Bold Vision for England's Forests

### On woodland expansion:

- Create a government-endorsed carbon scheme that encourages companies and individuals to invest in woodland creation
- Simplify grants schemes to make it easier for landowners and farmers to plant trees
- Review the current complex tax regime around forestry to make it more attractive to landowners as a long term shift in land use
- Increase government grant aid for woodland creation.

### On sustaining public enthusiasm for woods:

- Government to support a new community woodland advice service to inspire local communities to become involved in caring for their local woods
- Funds should be taken from planning gain (section 106 agreements & new conservation credits system) to create new community woods to ensure every community has a wood within walking distance
- Encourage everyone to visit woods, for recreation and spiritual refreshment and inspire others to do so via the exciting new web database [www.visitwoods.org.uk](http://www.visitwoods.org.uk) run by the Trust with 10 other partners.





## And finally...

New or amended forestry legislation to redefine the purpose, role and functions of the Forestry Commission, fit for the 21st century so that it has the powers it needs to encourage others to act, the resources it deserves to carry out its duties and the mandate to deliver even more public benefits on its own land.



WOODLAND  
TRUST

**The Woodland Trust**

**Kempton Way, Grantham, Lincolnshire NG31 6LL Tel 01476 581111**

**[woodlandtrust.org.uk](http://woodlandtrust.org.uk)**

**Registered office: The Woodland Trust, Kempton Way, Grantham, Lincolnshire NG31 6LL.  
Tel: 01476 581111 Website: [woodlandtrust.org.uk](http://woodlandtrust.org.uk)**

The Woodland Trust is a registered charity in England and Wales no. 294344 and in Scotland no. SC038885.  
A non-profit making company limited by guarantee. Registered in England no. 1982873.  
The Woodland Trust logo is a registered trademark.

**Photographs**

WTPL Rory Francis and Brian Aldrich

4739 09/11