

to Community

Dear Parish Councils,

My name is Lilly Dowe, and I am a Community Liaison Officer, as part of the Stakeholder & Community Relations Team for the onshore cable installation works for Hornsea Three offshore windfarm. A key objective is to deliver effective engagement to local stakeholders and communities in areas in which we construct and operate. As a key stakeholder, we would like to ensure you have visibility of our works and a key communication line to our Project.

I am writing to you to offer our attendance at one of your Parish Council meetings to discuss the project and answer any questions you may have.

If you would be interested in our offer, please provide us with a list of dates when we could attend. We do ask that you make a request at least **one month** in advance of the meeting with information on what topics you would like to discuss and questions you would like answered. This will allow us an opportunity to prepare for the meeting and ensure relevant information and or experts are available for the topics to be discussed.

Our Senior CLO, Dereth Morgan, or I will attend these meetings with technical members of the team who will be able to discuss the topics and questions you have raised prior to our attendance, subject to availability.

We will endeavour to meet with stakeholders as soon as we can. However, we cannot guarantee that we will always be able to attend the meeting requested, particularly if there are a high number of requests. Therefore, requests for meetings will be accepted on a first come first served basis unless there is an exceptional and time-sensitive circumstance that requires addressing.

We will ensure to maintain dialogue with all Parish Councils who request a meeting in the interim between the request and our attendance. During this time, we will be able to update on pertinent issues and agree with you the most appropriate time for our in-person discussion on the topics you have raised.

Event feedback

We are also seeking your feedback to gauge the communities' interest in events on the Project's activities that contribute to preserving and enhancing the environments and communities we work in.

We would appreciate you taking up this offer to help us determine the nature and content of these events so we can deliver the information that the community desires and provide a more holistic view of our activities.

Please could you leave your [feedback via this form](#), and encourage members of your community to do the same.

About Ørsted

The Ørsted vision is a world that runs entirely on green energy. Ørsted develops, constructs, and operates offshore and onshore wind farms, solar farms, energy storage facilities, renewable hydrogen and green fuels facilities, and bioenergy plants.

About Hornsea Three

The Hornsea Three wind farm received development consent in December 2020. Hornsea Three once complete, could provide clean power to over three million UK homes. It will make a significant contribution towards meeting the UK's net zero commitments and we're committed to working closely with stakeholders and local communities as we take the project forward.

Kind regards,

Lilly

Community Relations

Hornsea 3

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T: 0800 158 2354

W: www.HornseaProject3.co.uk

to

Sent on behalf of Mike Burrell, Greater Norwich Planning Policy Manager

Dear Clerk

This email is to update you on the status of the Greater Norwich Local Plan (GNLP).

The GNLP has been produced jointly by Broadland District Council, Norwich City Council and South Norfolk Council and was submitted to the Planning Inspectorate in July 2021 for examination. Examination hearings led by Independent Inspectors appointed by the Secretary of State took place during 2022 and 2023 with consultation on main modifications between 25 October and 6 December 2023. The Inspectors' Report was published on 20 February 2024. The conclusion of the report is that the GNLP is sound with the inclusion of the recommended main modifications.

As detailed in an email sent on 13 March 2024 the GNLP has already been formally adopted by Norwich City Council at a meeting of Full Council on 12 March 2024. In accordance with the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (as amended) and the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 (as amended), the Greater Norwich Development Partnership is writing to notify you that the GNLP has now also been formally adopted by South Norfolk Council at a meeting of Full Council on 25 March 2024 and Broadland District Council at a meeting of Full Council on 28 March 2024. The Plan is now subject to a 6 week legal challenge period which ends on 24 April for Norwich City Council, 7 May for South Norfolk Council and 10 May for Broadland District Council.

Copies of the adoption notices for South Norfolk and Broadland Councils are attached to this email and are also available to view on the GNLP website at www.gnlp.org.uk alongside the final local plan and other supporting documents.

Copies of the plan will be available for public viewing during normal office hours at the following locations:

- Broadland District Council and South Norfolk Council offices, The Horizon Centre, Broadland Business Park, Peachman Way, Norwich, NR7 0WF. Mon. – Fri. 08.30 – 17.00 (by appointment).
- Norwich City Council, City Hall, St Peters Street, Norwich, NR2 1NH Mon. – Fri. 08.45 – 13.00 & 14.00 – 17.00 (by appointment)

Please contact the GNLP team on 01603 306603 or email gnlp@norfolk.gov.uk to make an appointment.

You can also view the Local Plan documentation on the GNLP website in Norfolk libraries using their computers.

General Enquiries: 01603 306603 GNLP@norfolk.gov.uk

to

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A copy of the Norwich City Council adoption statement is attached to this email and is also available to view on the GNLP website at www.gnlp.org.uk alongside the final local plan and other supporting documents.

Hard copies of the plan will be available for public viewing by appointment during normal office hours (Mon. – Fri. 08.45 – 13.00 & 14.00 - 17.00) at Norwich City Council, City Hall, St Peters Street, Norwich. Please contact the GNLP team on 01603 306603 or email gnlp@norfolk.gov.uk to make an appointment.

You can also view the Local Plan documentation on the GNLP website in Norfolk libraries using their computers.

Adoption by South Norfolk Council and Broadland District Council is scheduled to take place at Full Council meetings on the 25 and 28 March 2024 respectively. Providing the plan is adopted at these meetings then you will receive a further email on Tuesday 2 April with the Broadland and South Norfolk adoption statements and information about the legal challenge period.

General Enquiries: 01603 306603 GNLP@norfolk.gov.uk

Liam Smith - Environment <liam.smith2@norfolk.gov.uk>

Thu, 28
Mar, 12:40

to

Good afternoon,

I hope you are well and looking forward to a long easter weekend.

I am contacting you as the listed point of contact for a local, town or parish council within Norfolk (but please feel free to share the following information with anyone and everyone who might be interested)

Norfolk Biodiversity Awards is an annual celebration of the tireless and dedicated efforts of people, projects and groups, who devote their time and effort to preserve, promote and enhance wild places and wildlife in Norfolk.

Nominations are now open and this year there are six different categories within which to make your nominations: **Young People's Achievement, The Saving Species Award, Spaces for Nature, Nature for Health and Wellbeing, The Groups award and The Rivers and Wetlands Award**. Nominees and their guests will be invited to attend an awards evening on June 23rd 2024 at the Forum in Norwich, where there will be guest speakers, food and drink, and where winners will be presented with framed certificates.

Alongside this award evening, there will also be a daytime event on June 23rd where nominees, and conservation organisations will be able to host stands and speak about their valuable work to members of the public. This is a great opportunity to recruit new volunteers, to generate interest in your projects and to network with likeminded people.

We are proud to say that the 2024 Norfolk Community Biodiversity Awards are generously sponsored by: **The RSPB, Lanpro, Norfolk Rivers Trust, Clarion Housing, Norfolk Wildlife Trust and Gressenhall Environmental Hub**.

Its quick and easy to make a nomination, you can even nominate yourself! Its completely free, so if you want to show appreciation to your local biodiversity heroes, you can do so here: <https://forms.office.com/e/2XhNvEwqQs>

If you have any questions at all, please don't hesitate to contact me.

Kind regards,

Liam Smith
Nature Recovery Officer
Norfolk Non-Native Species Initiative
Norfolk County Council - Community & Environmental Services Dept.
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Norfolk County Council





Olivia King <olivia.king@southnorfolkandbroadland.gov.uk>

Mon, 11
Mar, 11:09

to

Good Morning,

I am writing to make you aware of a new grant that we have available through the communities' team.

This grant is open for residents in the Broadland district who wish to implement a Play Street.

What are play streets?

Play streets (or 'playing out' sessions) are neighbour-led, short, road closures, creating a safe space for children to play freely together on their doorstep. Any street is eligible provided it is not on an active bus route.

Play streets typically allow children to play freely, without organised games or activities. In practice, this means children cycle, scoot, skate, chalk, skip, hopscotch, kick a ball around and make up games.

This model was first developed by parents on one street in [Bristol in 2009](#) and has now been taken up by hundreds of street communities all over the UK.

The key features of this model are:

- Resident-led and organised
- Short, regular road closures
- Free, child-led play
- All neighbours consulted and included
- Road legally and safely closed to through traffic
- Stewarded by residents
- Car access at walking pace
- Simple, 'normal' – not a street party!

For further information and advice please visit [Play Streets](#).

To apply for a Road Closure this should be done via [Norfolk County Council](#).

To support communities in taking part in the Play Streets initiative we are offering a Play streets Grant to help with additional costs.

What is the Play Streets Grant?

The grant offers up to £75 to communities who wish to take part in the Play Streets initiative. This may be used to fund:

- Low-cost items such as games and sports equipment for children and families to use during the play streets session.
- Any promotional activities to get the event up and running.

For further information and to apply for this grant please visit our website [here](#).

Please share this with your local communities and if you have any further questions please don't hesitate to contact the [communities team](#).

Many thanks

Olivia King

Event And Communities Support Officer

e olivia.king@southnorfolkandbroadland.gov.uk

Dear Sir/Madam,

I am writing to confirm that the planning application for our Norwich Western Link project has now been submitted to Norfolk County Council in their role as the planning authority.

After a validation period, the planning authority will then publish the planning application documents online and run a statutory public consultation, so everyone will have the opportunity to examine the proposals and comment on them should they wish to.

We will write to you again once the documents have been published and provide a link to where you can view them.

You may be aware that some new guidance on barbastelle bats was published last month by Natural England, a statutory environmental body. There are implications for the Norwich Western Link in this guidance and we are aiming to find an acceptable solution, including by continuing to discuss our proposals with Natural England as part of the planning process.

Best wishes,

Mark

Mark Kemp
Senior Project Manager
Infrastructure Delivery
Dept: 0344 800 8020
County Hall, Martineau Lane, Norwich, NR1 2DH

If you wish to contact the Norwich Western Link project team, please email norwichwesternlink@norfolk.gov.uk



Broadsheet

The Magazine for Broadland Tree Wardens

Issue 229 – April 2024

Climate Still Matters

Broadsheet

The Monthly Magazine for
Broadland Tree Wardens



Issue 229 – April 2024

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It is circulated free of charge to Broadland
Tree Wardens parish and town councils,
parish meetings and other interested parties.

Any views expressed are not necessarily
those of the Broadland Tree Warden Network.

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Climate Still Matters

ONCE again, I make no apologies for making our precious climate the headline subject of this month's Broadsheet. on 1 April the Met Office said that England and Wales had their wettest February on record this year ... although I guess that most of us had already worked that out!

A report for BBC Climate and Science and BBC Weather by Kate Stephens and Ben Rich revealed that the average temperature for England was 7.5°C, with an average of 6.9°C in Wales. The UK as a whole saw its second warmest recorded February.

Farmers say they are losing crops to floods while less frost hurts the growth of trees like apples and pears.

The provisional statistics are in line with long-term projections of warmer, wetter winters due to climate change.

The Met Office collects weather data every day. Before February was even over, that showed that parts of south Wales, the Midlands and Lincolnshire have seen more than two-and-a-half times their normal February rainfall.

The National Farmers' Union (NFU) says some farms in Lincolnshire are still underwater and have been since October.

"It's rained so many days on the trot that it's just built levels up more and more, and we're already at quite a saturated level," said Met Office meteorologist Annie Shuttleworth,

"It comes at the end of what has been a wet winter season overall," she said. "After December and January we'd already had 90 per cent of the winter rainfall. You'd normally expect

to be close to 65% by the end of January."

Some of that rain has come from named storms. There have been six named storms this winter, generated by a powerful jet stream - the flow of winds high in the atmosphere. Many of the storms have been directed across the south of the UK, so central and southern parts have been particularly wet.

It has also been a mild winter overall - with the lowest temperatures coming in the middle of January. This winter has been "notable for not having too many cold spells" says Met Office climate scientist Dr Mark McCarthy. "That's apparent in the number of days of frost we've had this winter. It might come out to be one of the least frosty winters in our historical records."

Furthermore, this fits with long term trends. In the last 50 or 60 years the world's climate has warmed by 1C. "If we're talking about frosts," says Dr McCarthy, "that 1°C of warming is equivalent to about three weeks' fewer frosts over the course of the year."

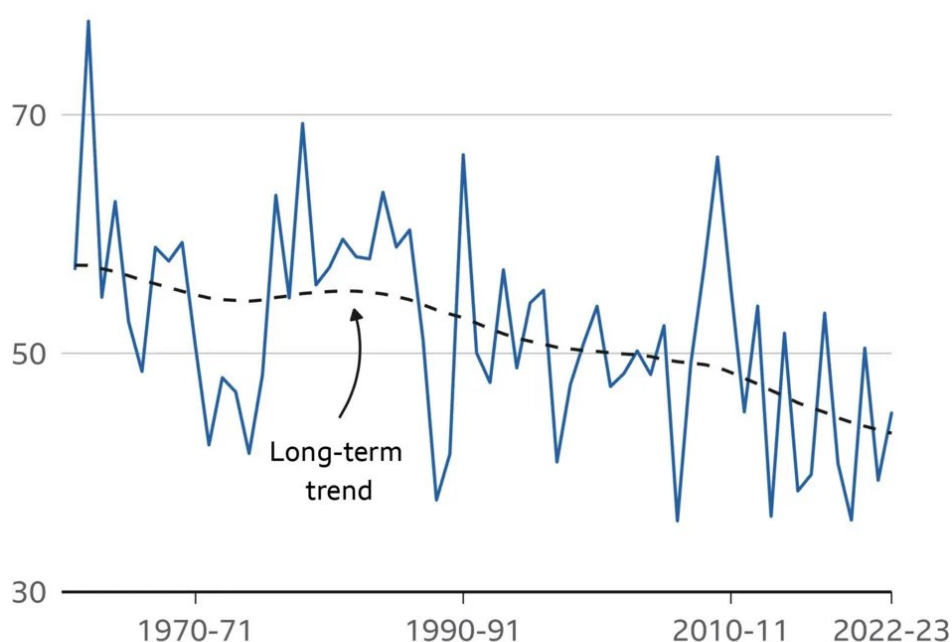
Cumbria and Edinburgh now see the same number of frosts in an average year as Sussex and Kent did 50 years ago.

Fewer frosts might sound like a good thing - less scraping ice off the car, for instance - but for some plants it's not such good news - and it could even have an impact on the food we eat.

Joe Richomme is the head of the kitchen garden at Kew Gardens in west London. He says frost is an essential part of the growth cycle

UK winters are getting less frosty

Average number of ground frost days per winter, 1961-62 to 2022-23



Winter months are December, January and February

Source: Met Office

BBC

of apple trees "particularly with traditional varieties, which need more of what we call chill hours - hours in the year where it's between zero and six degrees."

"If they don't get enough, they can produce less fruit buds, which later in the year will lead to less fruit, or perhaps even no fruit at all."

British grown apples aren't likely to leave our supermarket shelves completely.

Some of the most commonly sold breeds like Gala and Jazz have been bred to need fewer chill hours. But some traditional British types are at risk of eventually disappearing from orchards.

Will we ever see a cold winter again? Well, even as the climate warms overall, there will still be extremes of warm and cold weather.

As Dr Mark McCarthy puts it: "One common analogy is that the weather is what you choose to wear that day, and the climate is what's in your wardrobe. In other words, we'll still pull cold weather out of the "wardrobe" sometimes, but there are more warm weather "clothes" to choose from overall."

In fact, one of the defining features of our weather this winter has been its dramatic transitions from cold to unseasonably warm conditions.

Northern Scotland had both the UK's highest and lowest temperatures this winter, all within the space of just 11 days, with a minimum of -14°C and a high of 19.9°C. That high was in fact a new January record for the entire UK.

Annie Shuttleworth adds: "On average you're going to experience more warmer winters and more wetter winters - but you won't not see any cold weather. You need to prepare for both extremes. It's just more likely going to be warmer and wetter than cold and dry."

At Kew Gardens they're working hard to prepare for future wet and warm winters.

Tom Freeth is the head of plant records. "I've performed a complete assessment on all of our all of our big old plants, all of our woody plants" says Tom Freeth, the head of plant records. "We know which ones are vulnerable in certain scenarios and which ones we've got that might be resilient."

"So we can make a plan. If we plant something tomorrow, if we have done our job it will be alive in 2100."

IN the March edition of Broad-sheet, in the article "Climate More Important Than Politics", I was openly critical of our politicians and, like it or not, I am going to continue in the vain now!

Writing for The Guardian, Severin Carrell,



Fiona Harvey and Steven Morris reported that Ministers in Westminster have been accused of trying to blunt the teeth of the UK's net zero watchdog by appointing a Tory loyalist to the post of chair of the Climate Change Committee (CCC).

The leaders of the devolved governments in Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland have refused to approve any of the six shortlisted candidates, saying they are all too close to the

Conservatives and lack diversity.

The row has significantly delayed the UK government's attempts to appoint a successor to John Gummer (Lord Deben), the committee's first chair and a former Tory minister, who repeatedly challenged ministers for being insufficiently radical in their policies on combating global heating.

Since the CCC has a statutory duty to oversee climate policies for the UK government and all three devolved administrations, the shortlist requires consent from all four nations.

The Welsh and Scottish governments were the first to object to an initial shortlist of candidates and the latest list. The Northern Irish government tabled its objections after power-sharing resumed at Stormont last month.

A senior source said ministers in Cardiff, Edinburgh and Stormont suspected the Tories were attempting to ensure a Conservative was in control of the CCC under the assumption that Labour would win the next general election.

In a row that mirrors allegations about cronyism over appointments to chair the BBC and Ofcom, he said the UK government knew that Deben's successor would be in post for 10 years.

A separate Whitehall source said the failure to agree a shortlist meant the whole recruitment process might have to be rerun.

The latest shortlist, which includes the government's preferred candidate Sir Ian Cheshire, the former chair of Barclays Bank, included several serving or former Tory MPs and peers, and one other businessperson said to be a "true blue" supporter of the Tories. Several were former Tory ministers.

There were only two women, and all appeared to be white. There are no minority ethnic members of the CCC's current board, which has only one woman on it, and barely any minority ethnic members of its adaptation committee.

"We've got a real diversity issue here," the source said.

The shortlist for the chair was arrived at after an open competition was run, to which anyone could apply, through a government portal. The Guardian reported last summer that at least 60 candidates had applied. The devolved administrations have acknowledged that due process, as laid out under the Climate Change Act, was followed.

The Welsh government confirmed on Thursday that it had been unhappy with the list of candidates suggested by the Westminster administration. A Welsh government spokesperson said: "Welsh ministers have raised concerns about the list of candidates put forward by the UK government."

"The Climate Change Committee plays a critical role in helping all UK nations achieve net zero and build resilience to the impacts of climate change. Credibility is fundamental to its purpose, as is public confidence in its voice. We look forward to discussing a renewed recruitment process with colleagues in all four UK governments."

The Welsh climate minister, Julie James, wrote in a letter to her Westminster counterpart, Graham Stuart: "Your officials have shared with me a list of the candidates deemed appointable by the advisory assessment panel. I was extremely disappointed at the lack of diversity in that list, and believe it falls far short of the level required for such an important and high-profile person."

The Tories in Wales strongly criticised the move by Welsh Labour leaders. Andrew RT Davies, the leader of the Welsh Conservatives, said: "This is just a flavour of the extreme

ideology Labour is driven by. We see this all too often from Labour ministers in Wales, and there's no doubt that Keir Starmer would behave in the exact same way if he ever got the keys to Downing Street. Labour should rely on good old-fashioned experience and suitability when approving candidates, rather than making decisions based on people's immutable characteristics."

The issue has emerged at a time when the climate emergency is at the top of the political agenda in Wales. On Wednesday thousands of farmers protested on the steps of the Senedd over the Labour-led government's plans for new farming payments, which include restoring some farmland to nature to help combat the climate emergency.

It also comes as the Welsh leg of the Covid inquiry, which began in Cardiff this week, has refocused on tensions between ministers in Wales and their UK counterparts during the pandemic.

Deben was a farming minister and then environment secretary in Margaret Thatcher and John Major's governments. That itself raised the issue about whether it was appropriate for his successor also to be a Conservative, the source said.

"No one is making the argument it can't be a Tory just because they're a Tory. We are not saying that every single name on the list lacks climate credibility. But this is a list which is true blue from start to finish," he said. "This appointment is clearly designed to impose a Conservative chair, and this is for 10 years."

A Department for Energy Security and Net Zero spokesperson said: "The government's latest proposal identified a credible chair and deputy chair of the Climate Change Committee. Robust due diligence has taken place and all devolved administrations have been involved throughout the process. In the meantime, Piers Forster has been appointed as interim chair, allowing the committee to continue its work until a permanent chair is in place."

So please allow me to reiterate. Climate is more important than politics. For goodness sake, wake up and smell the coffee ... free trade of course!

MEANWHILE, the UN Environment Programme website reported that rich countries use six times more resources and generate 10 times the climate impacts than low-income ones

Extraction of the Earth's natural resources tripled in the past five decades, related to the massive build-up of infrastructure in many parts of the world and the high levels of material consumption, especially in upper-middle and high-income countries.

Material extraction is expected to rise by 60% by 2060 and could derail efforts to achieve not only global climate, biodiversity, and pollution targets but also economic prosperity and human well-being, according to a report published today by the UN Environment Programme (UNEP)-hosted International Resource Panel.

The 2024 Global Resource Outlook, developed by the International Resource Panel with authors from around the globe and launched during the sixth session of the UN Environment Assembly, calls for sweeping policy changes to bring humanity to live within its means and reduce this projected growth in resource use by one third, while growing the economy, improving well-being, and minimizing environmental impacts.

The report finds that growth in resource use since 1970 from 30 to 106 billion tonnes – or from 23 to 39 kg of materials used on average per person per day – has dramatic environmental impacts. Overall, resource extraction and processing account for over 60% of planet-warming emissions and for 40% of health-related impacts of air pollution.

The extraction and processing of biomass (eg agricultural crops and forestry) accounts for 90% of land-related biodiversity loss and water stress, as well as one-third of greenhouse gas emissions. Similarly, extraction and processing of fossil fuels, metals and non-metallic minerals (eg sand, gravel, clay) together account for 35% of global emissions.

"The triple planetary crisis of climate change, nature loss and pollution is driven from a crisis of unsustainable consumption and production. We must work with nature, instead of merely exploiting it," said Inger Andersen, Executive Director of UNEP. "Reducing the resource intensity of mobility, housing, food and energy systems is the only way we can achieve the Sustainable Development Goals and ultimately a just and liveable planet for all."

At the heart of global resource use are fundamental inequalities: low-income countries consume six times less materials and generate 10 times less climate impacts than those living in high-income countries. Upper middle-income countries have more than doubled resource use in the past 50 years due to their own growth in infrastructure and the relocation of resource intensive processes from high-income countries. At the same time, per capita resource use and related environmental impacts in low-income countries has remained relatively low and almost unchanged since 1995.

Where consumption levels are very high, greater focus on lowering resource and material consumption levels to complement action on production and resource efficiency can reduce around 30 per cent of global resource use as compared to historical trends, while growing the global economy, improving lives, and staying within planetary boundaries.

Where resource use needs to grow, strategies can be put in place to maximise the value of each unit of resource used and meet human needs in ways that are not resource intensive, so that the benefits of resource use far outpace the rate of their extraction and the environmental and health impacts stay in line with international obligations on climate, biodiversity, and sustainability.

Incorporating environmental externalities in trade agreements, strengthening regulation of financial commodity markets, and putting in place impact related border adjustment policies are just some of the ways that countries can prevent a race to the bottom on environmental and social standards of resource extraction, and maximise and retain the value from extraction processes in country.

"We should not accept that meeting human needs must be resource intensive, and we must stop stimulating extraction-based economic success. With decisive action by politicians and the private sector, a decent life for all is possible without costing the earth," said Janez Potočnik, the International Resource Panel's Co-Chair.

"Last year's climate conference agreed to transition away from fossil fuels. Now is the time to bring everyone to the table to phase up solutions to make that possible. Now is the time to phase up resource-based solutions for climate, biodiversity and equity so that everyone, everywhere can live a life in dignity," said Izabella Teixeira, the International Resource Panel's Co-Chair.

Specific recommendations include:

- Institutionalizing resource governance and defining resource use paths especially the consideration of sustainable resource use in strategies to implement Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs) and improving the ability of countries to benchmark and set targets for resource consumption and productivity. Directing finance towards sustainable resource use by reflecting the true costs of resources in the structure of the economy (ie subsidies, regulation, taxes, nudges, infrastructure, and planning). Additional recommendations include channelling private finance towards sustainable resource use and incorporating resource-related risk into Public and Central Bank mandates.
- Mainstreaming sustainable consumption options by making sure consumers have the right information, have access to and are able to afford sustainable goods and services. Such measures must be coupled with regulation to disincentivize or ban resource-intensive options (like non-essential single use plastic products).
- Making trade an engine of sustainable resource use by creating a level playing field where the true environmental and social costs of goods are reflected in prices by introducing MEAs into trade agreements, for example.
- Creating circular, resource-efficient and low impact solutions, and business models to include refuse, reduce, eco-design, reuse, repair, and recycling, as well as supportive regulation and evaluation of existing systems.

Implemented together, these policies can transform the built environment, mobility, food, and energy systems, resulting in an upsurge in renewable energies and energy efficiency, decarbonization of material production, more walkable and cyclable cities with better public transportation and remote work opportunities, as well as reduced food loss and waste. High- and upper-middle income countries would see a dietary shift away from animal protein and more compact cities, while lower-income economies would experience a rise in resource use to enable dignified living.

Such systemic shifts are projected to peak resource extraction by 2040 and then decrease use to only 20% above 2020 levels by 2060. Greenhouse gas emissions would drop by over 80%, stocks of transport-related materials and building materials would fall by 50 and 25% respectively, and land-use for agriculture would fall by 5%. Concurrently, food production would increase by 40%, to support populations, even where there is growth and food security, the global economy would grow by 3%, and the Human Development Index would improve by 7%, boosting incomes and well-being.

Given the failure so far to deliver on many policy commitments in MEAs and the urgency of the triple planetary crisis, the report supports immediate actions, following the principle of 'best available science.'

TIFFANIE TURNBULL reported for BBC News, Sydney, that officials have confirmed that a new mass bleaching event has hit the Great Barrier Reef.

Bleaching occurs when heat-stressed corals expel the algae that gives them life and colour. It is the fifth time in eight years widespread damage has been detected at the

Unesco World Heritage site.

Only two mass bleaching events had been recorded until 2016, and scientists say urgent climate action is needed for the reef to survive.

"The frequency and scale at which these mass bleaching events are now occurring is frightening. Every summer we're holding our breath," said Greenpeace Australia's David Ritter.

"Claims that Australia is taking the health of the Great Barrier Reef seriously ring hollow when we continue to expand and subsidise the coal and gas industry to the tune of billions every year."

"It's literally cooking the Reef," the Climate Council's Simon Bradshaw added.



Stretching over 1,400 miles off Australia's north-east coast, the Great Barrier Reef is the world's largest coral system and one of its most biodiverse habitats.

An aerial survey of 320 reefs - from the tip of Australia to the city of Bundaberg - showed most are experiencing prevalent bleaching, after a summer of heightened sea temperatures.

The Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority said in-water examinations are underway to determine the severity and depth of the damage - which likely varies greatly across the reef.

The body's Chief Scientist Roger Beeden told the BBC that bleaching in the southern zone though, was the worst in almost 20 years, and could become "unprecedented".

"It's too early to say what the full consequences of this event is," he said. "If the conditions cool, we could see a lot of what's bleached recover."

Over the past decade the reef has rebuilt itself from other mass bleaching events, severe tropical cyclones, and crown-of-thorns starfish outbreaks, he added.

Record-breaking global sea temperatures have recently triggered similar bleaching events in the northern hemisphere, and this week bleaching was also spotted on the world's southern-most reef at Lord Howe Island - which too lies in Australian waters.

The Great Barrier Reef has been heritage-listed for over 40 years due to its "enormous" importance, but Unesco says the icon is under "serious threat" from warming seas and pollution. Successive Australian governments have fought to keep the body from declaring the tourist drawcard "in danger", which could see it lose heritage status. The decision will be reviewed again in July.

Calling climate change "the biggest threat to coral reefs worldwide", Environment Minister Tanya Plibersek said her government has increased funding for reef conservation and introduced stronger emissions-reduction targets. "It's essential we do everything we can to protect this amazing place for our kids and grandkids," she said.

The UN's most recent climate change report found the prevalence of future mass bleaching events depends on how quickly the world cuts emissions.

JUSTIN ROWLATT, BBC News Climate Editor, reported that prime minister Rishi Sunak said on 12 March that the UK needs to build new, gas-fired power stations to ensure the country's energy security.

The new stations would replace existing plants, many of which are aging and will soon be retired, but the government says the plans do not include measures for climate change-limiting carbon capture. That could threaten a legally binding commitment to cut carbon emissions to net zero by 2050, critics say.

Mr Sunak, writing in the Daily Telegraph, said new gas power stations were needed to have a reliable and affordable back-up for days when renewables like wind and solar did not deliver. "It is the insurance policy Britain needs to protect our energy security, while we deliver our net zero transition," the prime minister wrote.

The government did not give any details about when or where the new power stations would be built. The decision, which Energy Security Secretary Claire Coutinho outlined in a speech at Chatham House in London, is part of a wide-reaching review of how the UK's energy market works.

However, the Green Alliance think tank said it "flies in the face" of the government's promise to reach zero-carbon electricity by 2035.

The Energy and Climate Intelligence Unit said falling North Sea output would leave the UK ever more dependent on foreign gas.

Labour accused the Tories of leaving the UK facing another 10 years of high energy bills, but acknowledged retiring gas-fired stations needed to be replaced. Shadow energy secretary Ed Miliband said: "The reason the Tories cannot deliver the lower bills and energy security we need is that they are specialists in failure when it comes to our clean energy future."

He accused the Conservatives of "persisting with the ludicrous ban on onshore wind, bungling the offshore wind auctions, and failing on energy efficiency".

Liberal Democrat energy and climate change spokesperson Wera Hobhouse said that announcement was "another step backwards on the critical road to net zero. We need to wean ourselves off this reliance on expensive fossil fuels by investing in cheap, clean renewable power and insulating every home," she said.

The government says the new plants will guarantee energy security, ensure low electricity prices in the future and rid Britain of the need to rely on foreign dictators like Russian President Vladimir Putin. "A nation that is dependent on the whims of dictators for its energy supply can never be truly safe," Mr Sunak wrote in the Daily Telegraph.

The government says it expects more and more of the UK's electricity to come from renewable power in the future but says it cannot be relied on completely.

So, as existing gas power stations are retired, they will need to be replaced with new ones, better suited to the requirements of an increasingly decarbonised energy system.

The new plants will be capable of operating efficiently for just an hour or two at a time to fill in the gaps from other power sources, the government said. The plan is they will be built by private investors.

The government said it will change the law to ensure the new plants would be capable of

being retrofitted to burn hydrogen or to be fitted with carbon capture and storage technologies in the future. It says its plans are in line with the recommendations of the Climate Change Committee (CCC), its independent watchdog on climate.

The CCC has said a "small amount" of gas generation without carbon capture is compatible with a decarbonised power system. It has estimated that might amount to 2% of annual electricity production.

However, Liam Hardy, a senior policy advisor at the Green Alliance think tank, said the decision to build new gas plants without carbon capture "flies in the face" of the government's promise to reach zero-carbon electricity by 2035. "Every new gas power plant built in the UK will make bills higher for consumers in the long run while increasing the risks of runaway climate change," he said.

Greenpeace said the government's plans would "make Britain more dependent on the very fossil fuel that sent our bills rocketing and our planet's temperature soaring. The only route to a low-cost, secure and clean energy system is through attracting massive private investment to develop renewables and upgrade our aging grid," said Doug Parr, policy director at the campaign group.

Meanwhile, Jess Ralston of the Energy and Climate Intelligence Unit warned that the new power plants would not reduce the UK's dependence on foreign gas. "The North Sea will continue its inevitable decline with or without new licenses leaving us ever more dependent on foreign gas unless we lower demand," she said.

ON a brighter note, I was delighted to read an article by Anthony Isaacs for BBC Radio Norfolk reporting that the Bishop of Norwich has said that the Church is right to promote biodiversity.

A Church of England decision to promote biodiversity on its land sends a "very important message", a bishop has said. The Bishop of Norwich, the Right Reverend Graham Usher, said the Church had a "prophetic voice to the whole world". Bishop Usher said the Church could not expect others to enhance biodiversity if it did not do the same.

He was speaking to BBC Norfolk after the Church's General Synod backed measures to promote biodiversity on Church land.

He said "If we are not getting our house in order why we expect anyone else to? So, to look at how we reduce our carbon emissions, to look at how we enhance biodiversity on our land, sends a very powerful message."

He said the Synod's decision sent a particularly important message to the Anglicans in the "poorest parts" of the world who were on the "front line of climate change".

Bishop Usher, the Church of England's lead Bishop for the Environment, also told a recent General Synod debate that there was a "need for immediate action" to promote biodiversity.

The Church's land and nature motion aims to give biodiversity "equal consideration with net zero carbon" as an urgent response to the "ecological crisis". Dioceses will be encouraged to develop their own land "action plan".

"We are all too aware that this single island planet home of ours faces the twin interrelated crises of climate change and biodiversity loss,"

he told the Synod.

"We are one of the most nature-depleted countries in the world. 2% of species are already extinct, 41% have declined since 1970, 26% of our mammals are at risk of extinction and 97% of UK's wildflower meadows have been lost since the 1930s.

He added: "We need to act now to help the diversity of life on this single island planet home we share."

Editor's comment - Well done Bishop!!

IPSWICH has achieved Tree City of the World (TCotW) status for the third year in a row, from the international programme which recognises work to manage and maintain urban forests and trees.

Now boasting a tree canopy cover of 15.51%, Ipswich is one of just 170 cities from 21 countries to receive this special recognition and celebrates Ipswich as a leader in urban and community forestry in the UK.

Since first gaining TCotW status in 2021, 10,667 trees have been planted in addition to the approximate 65,000 trees Ipswich Borough Council already has and maintains, reinforcing the Council's dedication to growing and supporting an urban forest in the area.

Environmental charity Trees for Cities is the UK lead for Tree Cities of the World, and is a proud partner in helping promote this initiative to local authorities nationwide.

Run by the Arbor Day Foundation and Food and Agriculture Organization of the UN, the programme focuses on creating more green spaces in urban areas by recognising the cities that do this well. Its shared vision is to connect cities around the world in a new network dedicated to adopting the most successful methods of managing urban trees and forests.

The programme is a global effort recognising cities and towns committed to ensuring their urban forests and trees are well maintained, sustainably managed and duly celebrated.

To earn the recognition of Tree Cities of the World status, Ipswich had to meet five core standards of urban forest management.

Councillor Phil Smart, Portfolio Holder for Environment and Climate Change at Ipswich Borough Council said "It's fantastic to receive this news following a very successful tree planting season for our dedicated parks team."

"We'd like to thank all the volunteers who supported us in planting 1,000 trees during Ipswich Loves Trees Week in February. We also had a very special tree planting in Bourne Park today of an oak sapling from Windsor Great Park, specifically selected by the Keeper of the Royal Gardens, to commemorate the coronation of HM King Charles III.

Achieving Tree City of the World status allows us to continue planting more trees each year and to develop our green spaces and award-winning parks to the benefit of the environment, wildlife as well as our residents and visitors for the future."

So that's it from me for this month I guess. The planting season is now closed.

Have a great April and stay safe.

**All the best,
John Fleetwood**

Protecting Ancient Woodland and Reforestation are Key to Tackling the Climate Crisis

By Martin Guttridge-Hewitt for Environment Journal

FOR International Day of Forests 2024 we look to the Heart of England Forest, a major tree planting project helping increase UK canopy coverage, which is now just 13%. In contrast, EU countries have an average 38% tree coverage. This fact alone should serve as an alarm call for widespread action to integrate more trees and woodlands into the UK's landscapes.

In line with this year's theme of **Forests and Innovation: New Solutions for a Better World**, the focus should not just be on the protection of ancient woodlands, but also on investment in pioneering reforestation initiatives.

Covering over 7,000 acres in Warwickshire and Worcestershire, The Heart of England Forest is dedicated to largescale tree planting and management to reverse woodland decline, support natures recovery, and mitigate the climate emergency. The charity has so far planted over two million trees. Here are our three recommendations for putting trees at the heart of UK action on the climate and biodiversity crises:

First, we must conserve and manage our remaining fragments of ancient woodland, which are those forested areas that have continuously existed since 1600. Covering just 2.5% of the UK, these irreplaceable habitats help to combat climate change.

When it comes to carbon sequestration, new laser scanning techniques have revealed that old forests weigh about twice as much as previously calculated – meaning they lock away approximately double the already prodigious volumes of carbon estimated.

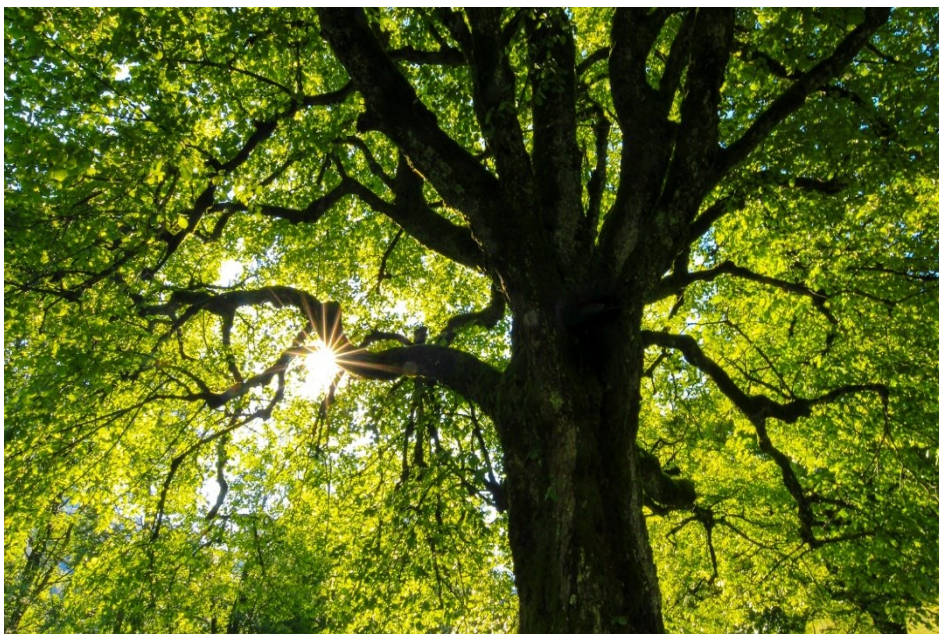
These kinds of woodlands have been around so long they have developed special communities of plants and animals not found elsewhere. With one in six species in the United Kingdom at risk of extinction, the protection of these woodlands is critical. Their richly complex biodiversity cannot be replicated.

There also needs to be investment in innovative reforestation projects. Seed collection is a fantastic example of this kind of ingenuity.

When planting new trees, or indeed entire woodlands, it's best to plant saplings grown from the seeds of trees that have demonstrated climate resilience. Developing seed-lines adapted to the changing local environment is the most sustainable way of futureproofing forests.

Seed collection is something we do at The Heart of England Forest, but we have strict protocols for it. Our team takes no more than half of the seeds available to ensure that there's enough food for wildlife over the winter.

They also meticulously survey and select the parent trees to ensure the traits of the next generation of trees are the most suitable for the changing local environment.



They prioritise the seeds of trees that have endured droughts or floods. Bountiful fruiting is another sought-after feature. They also always source seeds from a variety of sites to ensure a range of genetic diversity.

In 2022 to 2023, the Environment Agency estimated that 5.7 million properties in England – more than one in six – were at risk from flooding. Floods are increasingly prevalent because soaring temperatures mean that rainfall is becoming more intense.

Moreover, our landscapes have been modified to make them less capable of soaking up excess water. Urban areas have been paved, natural habitats have been converted to other uses and agricultural soils have become compacted due to intensive management.

The result is that the ground is less able to capture water by holding it in soils and vegetation or allowing it to percolate quickly into the permeable rocks below. Instead, water flows overland, quickly collecting in rivers and overwhelming flood defences.

In this context, innovative reforestation projects should be strategically targeted to areas prone to flooding, as trees help provide natural defences against rising waters.

They take moisture out of the soil. Their roots create passages through which rainwater flows. This root system also holds the soil in place, stopping nutrient-rich topsoil being

washed away into rivers and streams.

Our Forest has several important watercourses running through it, including the Rivers Arrow, Alne and Avon. To reduce the risk of flash flooding, our strategy includes the creation of wetland areas within the forest that fill up during flood events and then empty slowly.

We also plant trees and install leaky dams alongside and within watercourses to slow down and minimise subsequent localised floods.

In an age of interlinked climate and nature crises, woodlands offer solutions to many of our challenges. Thanks to their natural ability to lock in carbon, they have a fundamental role to play in reversing the climate crisis.

As home to vulnerable flora and fauna, they are also essential for natures recovery. When it comes to climate adaptation, planting the right kind of trees in the right places can help alleviate the mounting risk of flooding.

With the UK being one of the most nature-depleted countries on Earth, we can't wait any longer for those with power to make a serious commitment to saving and regenerating our forests.

We need urgent government and private sector investment in woodland conservation and innovative mass tree planting initiatives. Trees have always been at the heart of human societies and they're now an essential part of creating a better future for everyone.

Derbyshire Ash Trees Playing Vital Role in Protecting Species

From Natural England

ASH TREE samples from Derbyshire woodlands are being collected by Natural England as part of a national project to protect the tree species from being devastated by disease. Natural England is playing a key role in helping secure the future of the ash tree by supporting the Living Ash Project. Including Future Trees Trust, the project is collecting samples of ash that show resistance to ash dieback.

Ash dieback is a fungus which originated in Asia and its introduction about 30 years ago has devastated the European ash. The disease is predicted to kill up to 80% of ash trees across the UK, changing the landscape forever and threatening many species which rely on ash.

Future Trees Trust is collecting samples from across the country to grow in its national archives including ash trees which show high tolerance to ash dieback. The samples will be used for breeding work, field trials and genetic research.

So far more than 1000 tolerant ash trees have been sampled and planted within a public forest estate in Hampshire to start the first national archive.

The Trust is now gathering more samples from ash trees, showing a strong tolerance to ash dieback in the Derbyshire Dales and asked woodland site managers to keep track of any ash trees on their sites, where samples could be collected. This included sites in the Peak District Dales, owned by the National Trust and Chatsworth Estate.

The sample collection in Derbyshire was supported by Natural England's LIFE in the Ravines partnership, which is using EU LIFE funding to restore ravine woodlands in the Peak District Dales Special Area of Conservation (SAC), which is dominated by infected ash trees.

So far, the project has planted over 51,000 trees across the Peak District Dales SAC, restoring ravine woodlands in areas including the iconic five dales of the Derbyshire Dales National Nature Reserve, such as the well-visited Lathkill.

Neil Ford, Wooded Habitats Specialist at Natural England, said "Ash Dieback is having a devastating impact across the country and on the ash dominated ancient woodlands of the Peak District Dales. The LIFE in the Ravines Project Partnership has been working hard to secure the future of these sensitive habitats through a systematic approach to replacing the thinning ash canopy with native trees species that once thrived in these special places.

"Working together with the Living Ash Project, they've been able to use their extensive site knowledge to support Future Trees Trust to collect samples from trees less susceptible to the disease. This is a fantastic collaboration that means one day we will be able to reintroduce disease resistant ash back into the iconic limestone dales of the Peak District."

Leon Hayward, Lead Ranger for National



Trust in the White Peak, and LIFE in the Ravines partner, said "Ash dieback has severely impacted many of the woodlands in our care, including the much-loved woods of Dovedale National Nature Reserve. For years, we have been working to create healthier woodlands of the future in a variety of different ways.

"As part of that, it's great to help the Living Ash Project select and collect samples, so we can monitor potentially tolerant ash trees."

While the LIFE in the Ravines project is removing some of the infected ash trees to replace with a diverse mix of healthy tree species, the project team is also keeping track of any trees showing signs of tolerance to ash dieback, with an aim to protect a population of ash trees in the Dales.

A total of nine trees were identified on the heavily affected SAC, as they showed strong resistance to the disease. Samples from these trees were collected by Future Trees Trust, with support from the LIFE in the Ravines site team.

To be confident that the ash trees chosen for testing were exposed to the disease, the Trust's team looked for ash trees within woodland sites heavily dominated by infected ash. A list of tolerant ash trees was compiled after five years of searching, ready for sampling earlier this year.

John Everitt, Forestry Manager at Chatsworth Estate and LIFE in the Ravines partner, said "Both in the SAC and at other Derbyshire sites, we've been tracking the damage caused by ash dieback. As a follower of the Living Ash Project, we were more than happy to help Future Trees Trust collect

samples from our sites. We're excited to hear more about the project's next steps and welcome the opportunity to offer further support."

Samples collected across the country, will be grafted on up to 5,000 trees to be planted at both the Hampshire archive and a newly created site in Scotland. As a result of monitoring and testing their planted trees, they hope to create a more sustainable ash population in the UK, helping woodland managers preserve their sites.

Dr Jo Clark, Head of Research at Future Trees Trust said "In order to find the right trees and collect samples for our breeding program, we've worked with site managers from many different organisations. Collaboration with others including LIFE in the Ravines has been brilliant and shows how important it is to share knowledge and resources between projects."

With so many projects hoping to protect and conserve ash trees for the future, it's important we all work together and support each other through resource and knowledge sharing, to give us all the best chance of success. This will help ensure that ash trees remain a part of our environment for years to come, securing their survival in an uncertain future.

The Living Ash Project is DEFRA funded and involves many organisations including Forest Research, Future Trees Trust, Royal Botanical Gardens Kew, Fera and Natural England.

For more information on the Living Ash Project visit <https://www.futuretrees.org/> and <https://www.futuretrees.org/>

Giant Redwoods: World's Largest Trees 'Thriving in UK'

By Rebecca Morelle and Alison Francis for BBC News Science

GIANT REDWOODS - the world's largest trees - are flourishing in the UK and now even outnumber those found in their native range in California. The giants were first brought to the UK about 160 years ago and a new study suggests they are growing at a similar rate to their US counterparts. An estimated 500,000 trees are in the UK compared to 80,000 in California. However they aren't yet as tall. In California they can reach 90m high, but in the UK the tallest is 54.87m.

However that's because the introduced trees are still very young. Giant redwoods can live for more than 2,000 years, so there's still plenty of time for the UK's trees to catch up.

"Half a million trees is quite a lot to go under the radar until now, but it's when you start looking for them in the landscape, and compiling these datasets, that you realise how many there are," said Dr Phil Wilkes, one of the authors of the study, from Kew's botanic garden at Wakehurst in Sussex.

Giant redwoods (*Sequoiadendron giganteum*) were first brought to the UK by the Victorians. They were the ultimate botanical status symbol, typically planted in the grand estates of the wealthy.

Today, some form sweeping avenues while others stand in ones or twos, but they're easy to spot: their dense, cone-shaped crowns stand proud of everything around them.

To assess how these towering giants are adapting to their UK home, scientists selected a sample of nearly 5,000 trees to study at Wakehurst, Benmore Botanic Garden in Scotland and Havering Country Park in Essex.

They used laser scanners to measure the heights and volumes of some of the trees. It's also a way to weigh the trees without cutting them down.

The researchers found that the trees were growing about as fast as the giant redwoods in their native home in the mountains of Sierra Nevada. The UK climate seems to suit them, says Dr Wilkes.

He explained "Where they grow in California, it's cooler and moister than you would typically envisage California to be and we have a reasonably similar climate here. It's very wet and they need the moisture to grow."

The scientists also looked at how much carbon dioxide the trees were absorbing. Trees soak up and store the greenhouse gas and planting more trees can play a role in helping to tackle climate change.

The researchers found that because of their sheer size, giant redwoods can lock up large amounts of carbon dioxide in their wood, although not as much as their US counterparts.

The trees at Wakehurst, which are about 45m tall, have about 10 to 15 tonnes of carbon stored in them, Dr Wilkes explained.

"But compare this to the largest tree in California, which has about 250 tonnes of

carbon stored in it, and they're quite small. But you know, these could get as big."

The scientists involved in the research are quick to point out that planting forests of giant redwoods would not be enough to significantly reduce the amount of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere. However, these majestic giants can play a part in a mixed forest plantation with a variety of other trees, both native and imported.

In California, the natural wonders are under threat from climate change. They're not faring well with hotter and drier weather and more intense wildfires.

So could the UK become their new home?

In an avenue of trees originally planted as a grand entrance to a now demolished mansion in Havering Country Park, Prof Mat Disney, from University College London, says he thinks it's more than possible.

"In terms of climate, it's probably the case that they're going to have a less pressured existence here than they do in California," he said.

Although he pointed out that conditions are also changing in the UK with climate change.

Giant redwoods are being planted as saplings all over the country, often by local authorities in public parks or recreation grounds.

Prof Disney says they have a long life ahead of them and they won't stay small for long.

"They're very fast growing, and they grow large. Once they reach about 60m, they will be the tallest trees in Britain and then they will keep on growing," he said.

However, while the trees are doing well in the UK, there's little chance of them taking over our native forests any time soon. They're not reproducing here as they need very specific conditions to take seed.

The study is published in the Royal Society journal Open Science.



World's Oldest Fossilised Trees Discovered Along Devon And Somerset Coast

By Hannah Devlin Science Correspondent for the Guardian

THE world's oldest fossilised trees, dating back 390m years, have been found in the high sandstone cliffs along the Devon and Somerset coast. The fossilised trees are the oldest ever found, roughly 4 million years older than the previous record holder, which was found in New York state. The fossilised trees, known as *Calamophyton*, would resemble palm trees if seen from a distance, but were a "prototype" of the kinds of tree we are familiar with today..

Rather than solid wood, their trunks were thin and hollow in the centre and they stood between 2 and 4 metres tall. They also lacked leaves; their branches were covered in hundreds of twig-like structures.

The fossils were found near Minehead, on the south bank of the Bristol Channel, near what is now a Butlin's holiday camp.

"This was a pretty weird forest, not like any forest you would see today," said Prof Neil Davies, a geologist at the University of Cambridge and the study's first author. "There wasn't any undergrowth to speak of and grass hadn't yet appeared, but there were lots of twigs dropped by these densely packed trees, which had a big effect on the landscape."

Scientists had previously assumed that this stretch of the English coast did not contain significant plant fossils, but this find shows how early trees helped shape landscapes and stabilise riverbanks and coastlines hundreds of millions of years ago. The results are reported in the *Journal of the Geological Society*.

The forest dates back to the Devonian period, between 358 million and 419 million years ago, when life started its first big expansion on to land. By the end of the period, the first seed-bearing plants had appeared and the earliest land animals, mostly arthropods, were well established.

"The Devonian period fundamentally changed life on Earth," said Davies. "It also changed how water and land interacted with each other, since trees and other plants helped stabilise sediment through their root systems, but little is known about the very earliest forests."

The fossil forest identified by the researchers was found in the Hangman sandstone formation, along the north Devon and west Somerset coasts. During the Devonian period, this region was not attached to the rest of England, but instead lay farther south, connected to parts of Germany and Belgium, where similar Devonian fossils have been found.

"When I first saw pictures of the tree trunks, I immediately knew what they were, based on 30 years of studying this type of tree worldwide,"

said Dr Christopher Berry, a palaeobotanist at Cardiff University and the study's co-author. "It was amazing to see them so near to home, but the most revealing insight comes from seeing, for the first time, these trees in the positions where they grew."

"It is our first opportunity to look directly at the ecology of this earliest type of forest, to interpret the environment in which *Calamophyton* trees were growing, and to evaluate their impact on the sedimentary system."

The fieldwork was undertaken along the highest sea cliffs in England, some of which are

accessible only by boat, and revealed that this sandstone formation is in fact rich with plant fossil material from the Devonian period.

During that era, the site was a semi-arid plain, crisscrossed by small river channels spilling out from mountains to the north-west. The emergence of the first tightly packed clusters of trees would have affected the way that rivers flowed across the landscape, the researchers said. "People sometimes think that British rocks have been looked at enough, but this shows that revisiting them can yield important new discoveries," said Davies.



The Surprising US Region That's Home to the World's Oldest Forests

By Hillary Richard for BBC News

PICTURE a hot, tropical landscape near the equator full of shallow seas. Birds and invertebrates don't yet exist. Neither does the Atlantic Ocean. Instead, a mountain range the height of the Andes looms over fragile stretches of trees that resemble palms. This is what New York state looked like during the Devonian period, roughly 400 million years ago. It was a pivotal moment in time when forests as we now know them first appeared on Earth, radically shifting the planet's climate.

There are Devonian rocks scattered across the world, but during the 19th and 20th Centuries, the town of Gilboa, New York, became world famous for the discovery of its rare fossil forests (groups of preserved tree stumps containing the remnants of ancient trees). They were recognised as the oldest in the world at around 380 million years old.

That is, until the 2018 discovery at a quarry in nearby Cairo, New York, revealed evidence of a 385-million-year-old forest, which has been estimated to be two to three million years older than Gilboa. In January 2024, the Cairo discovery hit the news again, when the site received funding to protect the currently off-limits area as a first step towards turning it into an educational site and scientific preserve.

Fossils are constantly popping up in the region. Since approximately 10% of New York has Devonian rocks, the Catskills and the counties north of them are a dream for hikers and rockhounds alike.

"More fossil forests have to be scattered throughout the Catskills region, in rocks deposited by rivers onto land," said Dr Charles Ver Straeten, a Devonian geologist and curator of sedimentary rocks at the New York State Museum. "There must be thousands of fossil forests preserved here, just not easily found under modern forests and soils."

Ver Straeten was part of the discovery of the world's oldest forest ecology at the Cairo quarry. He was out digging one day in 2009 with his colleagues Linda Van Aller Hernick and Frank Mannolini when he noticed an unusual gutter-like imprint. Over the years, the trio traced the impressions of 11 large root systems, some six to eight inches across, on the world's oldest forest floor. In 2018, they acquired a drone, which allowed them to survey the large tree imprints from above and understand the full scale of the root systems for the first time. They found at least three types of trees here, which grew at a pivotal point in environmental history.

Scientists are still learning about these ancient trees that may hold clues to unanswered questions about the evolution of ancient forest ecosystems and climate changes.

With the origin of forests, carbon dioxide levels in the atmosphere dropped, which cooled global temperatures. Trees that could absorb



carbon dioxide and provide shade, like those found in Cairo and Gilboa, led to the global cooling in the Paleozoic era (541 to 252 million years ago) and ultimately helped creatures evolve into land-dwelling vertebrates. With extensive deforestation worldwide and an increase in carbon dioxide levels, we're now seeing a similar climate change process but in reverse.

The ancient environments in Cairo and Gilboa were markedly different. Gilboa had water-soaked forests punctuated by catastrophic floods that moved massive amounts of sand. Cairo saw a quieter environment with both wet and dry periods. A final flood event in Cairo most likely killed the trees in the forests, preserving them like a snapshot in time. Gilboa's trees experienced a similar snapshot event, but in that case, water helped entomb the trees in sand, creating sandstone casts.

"At the beginning of the Devonian, about 420 million years ago, the tallest plants were only several inches tall. There were no leaves at that point and all the plants were spore bearing. By about 30 million years later, in the middle of the Devonian Period, plants had evolved to tree sized. Gilboa was the first place to make such a major discovery," explained Ver Straeten.

Some of these fossil casts (the remainders of the Gilboa fossil forests) are now on display at the Gilboa Museum, roughly 40 minutes north-west of Cairo. Gilboa was a thriving town in the late 19th Century but was evacuated and turned into a watershed in 1927 to provide a growing New York City with fresh water. It was during that process when palaeontologists discovered around 40 unique tree fossils, which thrust Gilboa onto the paleontological world stage.

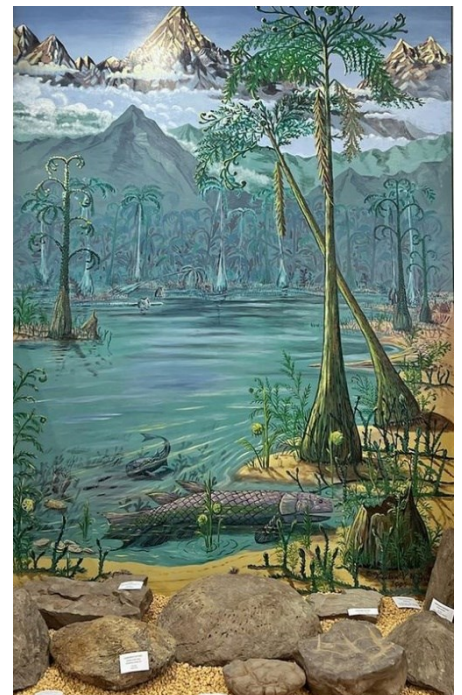
"Our ancestors all lost their homes in Gilboa during the building of the dam that flooded the town, but the positive thing is that they found these Gilboa fossils. They generate a lot of information for the world because these are the first forests that live on Earth and absorbed carbon dioxide," explained Kristen Wyckoff, a fossil enthusiast, an original founder of the Gilboa Museum in 2005 and the current vice

president of the Gilboa Historical Society. "We're among the oldest trees in the world now."

One tree in particular dominated the ancient Gilboa fossil forests: *Eospermatopteris*.

Eospermatopteris trees had an onion-like bulb at the bottom and finger-like roots that extended into the soil. A hollow trunk led to a top with fronds. While it looked similar to a palm tree, the species are unrelated; *Eospermatopteris* is believed to be more closely related to modern ferns.

Hanging in the Gilboa Museum are two large artworks painted by Wyckoff, depicting what the trees and landscape would have looked like in Devonian times. Large *Eospermatopteris* dot the coastline of a tropical sea, with cloud cover hovering beneath the tall mountain peaks. She had to redo a painting after a 2011 hurricane revealed several rare fossils in the Schoharie Creek, a river that flows through the region for 150km, including roots from *Tetrazylopteris* (also called the snake tree), a section of the oldest *Arborescent Lycopods* (one of the earliest vascular plants) ever found and a crown portion of *Eospermatopteris*.



Elsewhere in the museum, there are casts of fossils everywhere. To the untrained eye, they look like segments of tree stumps and rocks with striations. Some have the occasional leaf pattern, like the fossil from the

Archaeopteris tree of the late Devonian period, which was found in nearby Delaware County. For years, this was the oldest complete tree fossil ever recorded until *Eospermatopteris* took that crown.

With its conifers and deciduous trees, plus the significant erosion of the Catskill mountains, this region today looks markedly different than its tropical past when what is now North America lay below the equator, but there are still some remnants of the ancient forests to be found.

"When you walk through the forests in New York, you can see these little plants called ground pines. They're maybe three to six inches on the forest floor. So that group of plants were

around in the Devonian," said Ver Straeten.

Furthermore, there are still fossils to be found in Central New York and the Catskills for those who know what to look for. This summer, the Gilboa Museum will hold its first fossil walks and explorations. While hearing about the ancient geology in the area, participants will learn how to identify fossils – and even attempt to find some. New York State is also in the process of establishing a New York Geological Trail that will reportedly include Cairo and Gilboa.

Slightly south, in the Catskills, hiking through areas like Kaaterskill Clove and North South Lake will reveal forests of dense, tall,

woody trees, old in their own right, with branches that stretch tall and wide. They may hide waterfalls, or shale or sandstone rocks, which are remnants from Devonian times. The mountains themselves have eroded over time, but the trees – now seed bearing – have grown and thrived, part of an ecosystem filled with birds, insects and mammals that depend on the trees for food and shelter. The shallow seas and tropical climate are long gone, but all it takes to transport back to Devonian New York is a newfound understanding of the fossil forests and a little imagination.

Forest and Climate Scientists Fear Biden Delay on Mature Forest Protection

By Justin Catanoso for Mongabay

TWO hundred leading U.S. forest ecologists and climate scientists are calling on the Biden Administration to do much more, and much sooner, to protect old-growth and mature forests on federal lands to combat climate change. Their urging comes after Biden's announcement in December of the first nationwide amendment in more than a hundred years to change all 128 U.S. Forest Service management plans in order to protect stands of old-growth trees as carbon reservoirs.

The signed letter received at the White House 24 February, and also received by the secretaries of agriculture and interior, calls for an immediate moratorium on logging of not only old-growth forests, but also mature forests with trees 100 years old or older on federal lands.

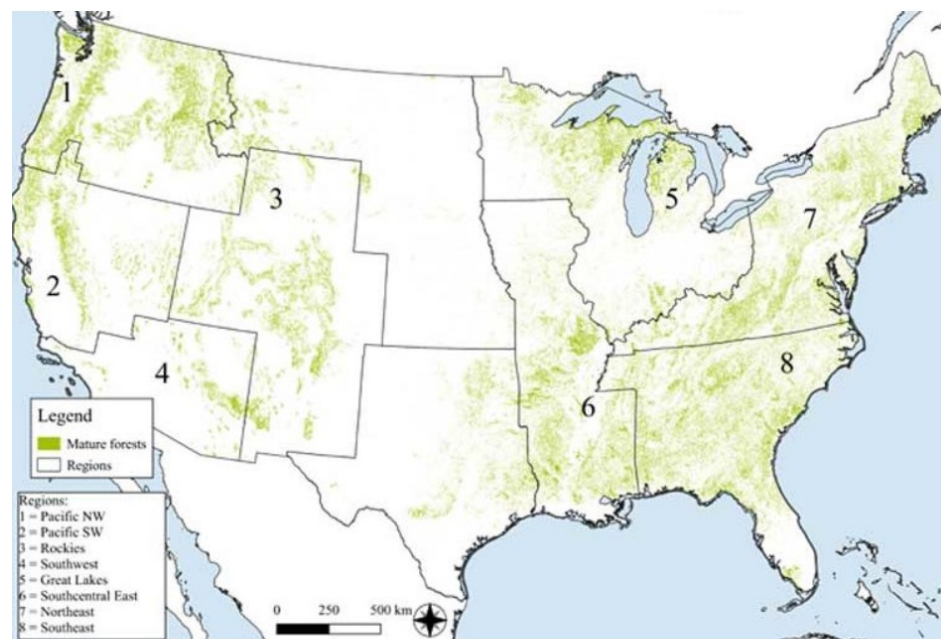
Those mature forests are currently managed by the Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management (BLM) for multiple use, including logging, wildfire mitigation, recreation and wildlife and ecosystem protection.

The letter states "Because of the global loss of mature and old-growth forests... and their importance in mitigating the climate and biodiversity crisis on federal lands, we fully support calls by fellow scientists for a moratorium on logging in these critically important forests."

The letter continues: "We are concerned that the administration's proposed old-growth amendment does not alter or prescribe any substantive standards for the management of old forests that ... remain vulnerable to dozens of timber sales nationally."

Dominick DellaSala, chief scientist with Oregon's Wild Heritage Project and co-author of the letter, told Mongabay: "The Biden Administration needs to follow through on its global commitments [made in 2021] to end deforestation and forest degradation and to protect at least 30% of the nation's lands and waters by 2030. Unfortunately, the National Old-Growth Amendment doesn't go far enough because it leaves out mature forests that are essential in beginning the recovery of greatly depleted old-growth ecosystems on federal lands."

Among the 200 signatories of the letter are three members of the National Academy of Sciences: climate scientists Jim Hansen of



A 2023 inventory map generated by researchers showing mature and old-growth forests by region across the U.S. There are 112.8 million acres (45.6 million hectares) of old-growth and mature forests on federal lands — collectively an area larger than California, but less than a quarter is fully protected from logging. Image courtesy of Dominick DellaSala / Wild Heritage.

Columbia University and Michael Mann of the University of Pennsylvania, as well as biogeochemist William Schlesinger at the Cary Institute of Ecosystems Studies.

At stake are 112.8 million acres (45.6 million hectares) of old-growth and mature forests on federal lands coast to coast, according to a 2023 inventory by the Forest Service and BLM. Collectively an area larger than California. According to 2022 research led by DellaSala, less than a quarter of that acreage is now protected from logging.

In an essay published in *The Conversation*, Bev Law of Oregon State University and Bill Moomaw of Tufts University, both forest ecology experts and Biden-letter signees, argue that forests are essential to what they called Earth's operating system.

"In the U.S., forests take up 12% of the nation's greenhouse gas emissions annually and store carbon long term in trees and soils," they wrote. "Mature and old-growth forests, with larger trees than younger trees, play an outsized role in accumulating carbon and keeping it out

of the atmosphere. These forests are especially resistant to wildfires and other natural disturbances as the climate warms.”

The Biden-letter signees note that the science behind their urgent plea to protect U.S. old-growth and mature forests is strong. But election-year politics, especially in a highly competitive presidential election, tends to mute such recommendations, even though Biden has pushed a far more aggressive climate-mitigation agenda than any predecessor.

The president drew praise from environmentalists in 2021 with an Earth Day 30-by-30 pledge, cited by DellaSala. The president later requested a sweeping old-growth and mature forest inventory of federal lands. The administration’s National Old-Growth Amendment to the Forest Service management plans is likewise historic.

However, policies remain in place that appear to favour the forestry industry over conservation.

Two days before the amendment was released on 20 December 2023, to a generally positive response, Christopher French, deputy chief of the National Forest System for the

USDA Forest Service, sent a letter to regional foresters. He instructed them that “any project proposing vegetation management activities that will occur where old-growth forest conditions exist” must be submitted to him for review and approval, not decided at local levels.

To Moomaw, who shared that letter with Mongabay, the message is troubling and unacceptable; leaving a loophole for business as usual for the foreseeable future: “It could be two years before the old-growth amendment becomes policy. Meanwhile, logging is being allowed in mature forests and in some old-growth forests. We need this moratorium now because what is happening is irreversible. Logging is destroying carbon sinks while adding to emissions when we can no longer afford it.”

In research published in *Nature* in April 2023, scientists estimated that global wood harvests “will add 3.5 billion to 4.2 billion tonnes of CO₂ to the atmosphere each year between 2010 and 2050.” That estimate is roughly equivalent to the increase in global emissions from annual land-use expansions for agriculture — a leading cause of greenhouse gas emissions.

The U.S. Forest Service, along with the timber industry, continues to argue that wood harvests from mature forests are needed to reduce the risk of wildfires and disease infestations. Moomaw and other researchers reject those arguments as scientifically invalid excuses to continue logging on federal lands during a rapidly escalating climate crisis.

The Biden letter reminds the administration that the U.S. signed the Glasgow Leaders’ Declaration of Forests and Land Use in 2021 along with 140 other countries, pledging to end global deforestation by 2030. Also, as a party to the 2015 Paris Agreement, the U.S. has promised to “conserve and enhance” carbon sinks and reservoirs, which define the nature of mature and old-growth forests.

These issues are being debated in Washington D.C. this week as the Society of American Foresters hosts the Mature and Old-Growth Forests Summit. DellaSala is speaking there on the ecology and management of old forests. Moomaw plans to attend and share the White House letter with attendees. Meanwhile, U.S. old-growth and mature forests hang in the balance.

Two Million Hectares of Queensland Forest Destroyed in Five Years

By Aston Brown for The Guardian

MORE than 2m hectares (4.94m acres) of bushland in Queensland that included large swathes of possible koala habitat has been cleared over a five-year period, new analysis shows. The research, commissioned by Greenpeace and conducted by the University of Queensland academic Martin Taylor, found almost all land clearing that occurred in the state between 2016 and 2021 was in areas where threatened species habitat was “likely to occur”.

Almost two-thirds of the cleared area, or 1.3m hectares, was marked by the Queensland government as “category x”, meaning it was exempt from state vegetation laws that regulate land clearing. Some 500,000 hectares of that land was koala habitat, the report said.

Taylor, an adjunct professor at the University of Queensland and former WWF-Australia conservation scientist, conducted the analysis by comparing state government land clearing data to federally mapped areas of environmental significance.

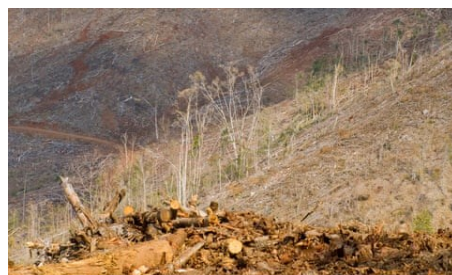
The majority of recorded land clearing occurred in regrowth forest that was more than 15 years old, which Taylor said made it capable of providing rich habitat for native animals.

“Industry voices like to say this is just controlling knee-high regrowth, so it’s just vegetation management,” he said. “[But] a 15-year-old eucalypt forest can be at least 10 to 15 metres high. They are forests.”

Taylor said that while laws in Queensland allow for regrowth forests to be reclassified as remnant once they mature, the requirements to do so are unclear.

“A lot of regrowth 15 years and older could have already become what they define as remnant, making it more difficult to clear,” he said.

Gemma Plesman, a senior campaigner at Greenpeace Australia Pacific, said the report



documented deforestation on a “frightening” scale. She said the state’s annual statewide land cover and tree study (Slats) shows land clearing was driven by beef production.

According to the beef industry, more than 10m cattle graze on Queensland pastures, making it the biggest beef producing state in the country.

“Fast food chains and retailers should be aware that the beef they are selling could come from properties that have bulldozed koala habitat with no government oversight,” Plesman said.

Plesman said environmental law reforms being developed by the federal government needed to address concerns around deforestation in Queensland to be effective.

“This shocking data should be a wake-up call,” she said. “They must address what has made Australia a global hotspot for

deforestation.”

The Wilderness Society Queensland campaign manager, Hannah Schuch, said deforestation in Queensland was driving biodiversity loss.

“It’s having an impact on iconic native species like the koala, the greater glider, the red goshawk, it’s tearing down their homes and pushing them towards extinction,” she said.

“We know that erosion and sediment runoff from deforestation is another threat to the already at-risk Great Barrier Reef,” she said.

A spokesperson for the federal environment minister, Tanya Plibersek, said the government was in the consultation process to develop new national environment laws. However, three organisations familiar with the draft laws say they would continue to allow widespread deforestation.

Michael Guerin, the chief executive of Queensland farming body AgForce, questioned the accuracy of the Slats data which was used in Taylor’s analysis. He said deforestation rates were overstated.

He suggested there should be an on-the-ground survey to confirm deforestation rates.

“Let’s come out and ground truth it,” Guerin said. “Let’s get out on the landscape and spend the money and time so we’re confident about what’s happening. The industry and community are up for that.”

Biodiversity Net Gain in Plain English

By Johnny Campbell and Jon Dearsley of Savills

BIODIVERSITY net gain (BNG) was introduced by the Environment Act 2021. It is an approach to planning and development that aims to ensure development leaves the natural environment in a measurably better state than it was before. BNG requirements should enhance and create natural habitats and help towards building the resilience of wildlife and its ability to adapt to climate change.

From 12 February 2024, it is mandatory for all Town and Country Planning Act developments granted planning permission to provide a minimum 10% net gain in biodiversity, measured against pre-development figures.

From that date, local planning authorities can set local plans to seek additional biodiversity net gains above the national minimum of 10%. Currently there are few examples of LPA stipulating a 20% uplift in biodiversity, however this is not commonplace.

Biodiversity uplift can be achieved through habitat creation or enhancement on-site and/or off-site, or through the purchase of statutory biodiversity credits from the Government. The mitigation hierarchy for BNG is set out in national policy. Developers are encouraged to follow these steps in order to:

- Avoid or reduce biodiversity impacts through site selection and development layout;
- Enhance and restore biodiversity on-site;

- Create or enhance off-site habitats, either on the developer's own land or by purchasing biodiversity units
- As a last resort, to prevent undue delays, purchase statutory biodiversity credits from the UK Government (if they can demonstrate that they are unable to achieve biodiversity net gain through on-site or off-site measures).

BNG units will be legally secured either through a Section 106 agreement or Conservation Covenant. Where credits are bought from the Government, the council would disclose a mandatory BNG contribution fee (per biodiversity unit) upon issuing planning permission, which would fund net gain provision elsewhere. While local authorities will be able to sell biodiversity units, developers can also negotiate to purchase credits from local landowners or other developers with an excess of biodiversity units.

Initial estimates from Department for Environmental, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) placed biodiversity units at anywhere between £9,000 and £15,000 per unit, though current comparables are in excess of double this figure.

Any biodiversity enhancement used to achieve a biodiversity net gain will need to be maintained for a minimum period of 30 years.

Current guidance states that all planning applications as of 12 February 2024 will need to be accompanied by biodiversity net gain information, including:

- The pre-development 'baseline' value measured using the most recent Defra biodiversity metric;
- The proposed approach to enhancing biodiversity on-site;
- Any proposed off-site biodiversity enhancements that have been planned or arranged.

The BNG requirement will be framed as a pre-commencement planning condition, meaning that the biodiversity gain plan must be approved by the local planning authority, allowing for the condition to be discharged before development can begin.

Following the Natural England Consultations there is now further guidance and standard templates of the documents required for delivering BNG.

Newcastle a Tree City of the World

NEWCASTLE is a Tree City of the World, due to its dedication to growing and maintaining trees. In the past year the North East Community Forest, of which Newcastle City Council is the lead local authority, has planted over 20,000 trees and hedgerows and the council has planted almost 300 trees on land in and around the city.

This combined makes up and area of over 24 hectares, the size of almost 40 football pitches.

Increasing the number of trees in a community can help reduce costs for energy, storm water management, and erosion control. In addition, inclusion in the programme provides a network of like-minded city leaders in urban forestry to celebrate and share best practices to cultivate greenery in the community.

Cllr Marion Williams, Cabinet Member for a Connected, Clean City, Newcastle City Council said: "It is fantastic that Newcastle has gained this international recognition for our commitment to creating a cleaner, greener city for both residents and visitors to enjoy. Improving the local environment for our residents, supporting our local wildlife and improving air quality is incredibly important and we look forward to working within this new network."

Environmental charity Trees for Cities is the UK lead for Tree Cities of the World, and is a proud partner in helping promote this initiative to local authorities nationwide. The recognition



scheme is run globally by the Arbor Day Foundation and Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations.

Roddy Shaw, UK Urban Forest Development Manager said: "Trees for Cities is delighted to welcome Newcastle as one of the UK's Tree Cities of the World. Having supported tree planting in Newcastle for a number of years,

it is fantastic to see the city recognised for its commitment to urban trees."

To earn Tree Cities of the World recognition, Newcastle demonstrated its commitment by meeting five programme standards: establish responsibility for the care of trees, set rules to govern the management of forests and trees, maintain an updated inventory or assessment of local tree resources, allocate resources for a tree management plan, and hold an annual celebration of trees to educate residents.

Over 14,000 trees this planting season will be planted and maintained by local residents and community groups in Newcastle, embedding ongoing community stewardship into the NECF initiative.

The council has also recently launched a new Community Tree Portal, an online resource where residents can find out about trees managed by the Council, including the benefits they provide, how they are being managed and their value as community assets.

More information on the program is available on the [Tree Cities of the World](#) website.

Poland's 'Heart of the Garden' Crowned Tree of the Year 2024

By Maddie Molloy, BBC News Climate and Science

A POLISH tree nicknamed Heart of the Garden, pictured below, has won the 2024 European Tree of the Year contest that celebrates our relationship with nature by showcasing beautiful and unique trees from across the continent. The monumental common beech tree grows in an old park in the University of Wroclaw's botanical garden. It's the third Polish tree in a row to win.

Taking second place is the Weeping Beech of Bayeux in Normandy. Spreading over 40m, the city has provided structural support to keep it standing.

In third place is the 1,000-year-old Olive Tree of Luras in Sardinia, Italy. Estimated to be between 3,000 and 4,000 years old, it's one of the oldest specimens of wild olive on the island.

The curiously curated common camellia from Portugal was a strong runner-up. It stands out for centuries of careful shaping.

The UK's entry, Wrexham's sweet chestnut in Acton Park, came in tenth place. Thought to be almost 500 years old, this giant tree has weathered many storms and survived being pillaged for firewood in 1940s post-war Britain.

The full results can be seen on Europe's [Tree of the Year website](#).



Broadland District Council Grant Helps Protect Jary's Meadow

By Sophie Skyring, for The Great Yarmouth Mercury

BROADLAND DISTRICT COUNCIL has funded a new gate for Jary's Meadow. The Blofield and District Conservation Group (BADCOG) received £410 from the council after reaching out to Councillor Paul Newstead. Cllr Newstead, elected member for Blofield with South Walsham, allocated the grant from his £1,000 Ward Funding.

The conservation group used this funding to erect a new field gate at the entrance of the meadow.

Cllr Newstead said: "I was delighted to be able to support this fantastic group that does so much for the local community. "Many of the beautiful sites around the area are maintained and enhanced because of the hard work and selflessness shown by these passionate volunteers."

BADCOG, a volunteer-based group, has been maintaining conservation areas in the area for more than 40 years. These include ponds, churchyards, and woods. Since 2005, when they purchased Jary's Meadow, they have worked to make continuous improvements to the 2.5 acre site. The chairman of BADCOG, Tony McKie, said: "Jary's Meadow is a lovely site with a wide range of flora and fauna.



"Over the years we have planted a variety of native trees and shrubs to further enhance it for wildlife. The new gate will ensure there is a safe entrance for local residents and visitors, while protecting the site from off-road vehicles."

In addition to Jary's Meadow, BADCOG also oversees the management of 14 other

conservation sites, including the council-owned Snowdrop Acre in Witton. The site was once the garden of decorated WWI hero Hayrick Antony Greatorox. He moved to Norfolk with his family in 1915, and after the war he pioneered the breeding of snowdrops. More varieties of named snowdrops are derived from his garden than any other in Britain.

Cllr Newstead said: "Snowdrop Acre is a really special site and historically and botanically very important. We are very grateful to all the volunteers who give up their time to take care of it and help preserve it for future generations."

The group currently has around 40 volunteers and is always looking for new members. Mr McKie said: "We are a very sociable group who like getting outdoors and getting some exercise, while helping to make a difference to our local environment."

Tree Planting Subsidies

SEVERIN CARRELL reported for The Guardian that the Royal Society of Edinburgh has said the tens of millions of pounds in subsidies given to the timber industry should instead be spent on longer-living native forests, which have greater and clearer climate and biodiversity benefits.

It said the Scottish and UK governments are wrong to argue that public subsidies are needed to help plant more, larger conifer forests. These plantations are largely monocultures using a single species that have a relatively short lifespan.

Instead, public subsidies should be diverted to planting millions of native broadleaf trees, including in urban areas, which capture and keep more CO₂, support more plant and animal species, store more carbon in the soil, and have a far longer lifespan.

The RSE report found that:

- In Scotland, ministers have subsidised forestry by more than £390m over the last decade, with roughly 80% of that spent on commercial conifer plantations, as well as extra subsidies for haulage.
- Timber companies and landowners pay no corporation tax on their income from forests; profits from timber sales are tax-free; there is no capital gains tax on the value of the trees, and 100% inheritance tax relief on the forestry property.
- Forest owners were also able to sell carbon credits, adding to the attractiveness of forestry as an investment.
- These grants, tax breaks and carbon credits had helped to substantially drive up land prices in Scotland, up by 73% in a single year, greatly distorting the land market and pricing people out.
- Government agencies are not properly enforcing policies which require environmental impact assessments on new forest projects; their approach is "inadequate" and "passive".

The RSE, Scotland's national academy, said significant changes in government strategy were urgently needed at a time when governments are cutting public spending, including on nature recovery.

"Our scarce public funds must be used to maximise benefits for both the public and our environment," said Prof Pat Monaghan, regius professor of zoology at the University of Glasgow and one of the report's authors.

She said: "We now face the twin crises of climate change and biodiversity loss. We must ensure that our investments in tree planting are done in ways that reduce our carbon emissions without reducing our precious and fragile biodiversity."

The RSE said it was very surprised the Treasury had no data on how much tax the exchequer had foregone due to these tax breaks, even though these policies had been criticised repeatedly in recent decades.

While tax breaks for forestry are the same as those for farming, this support for forestry appeared to be based on the notion that having a domestic timber supply was of strategic

importance at time of war – a policy that had been scrapped in the 1950s.

The Department for Environment, Farming and Rural Affairs, which oversees policy and funding for England, set aside £222m between 2020 and 2024 for woodland on private land. But 77% of English woodland is native broadleaf, compared with 29% in Scotland.

Prof Ian Wall, who chaired the RSE's inquiry, said: "The role of trees – the right trees in the right place – in improving biodiversity, carbon-capture, and wellbeing in both urban and rural environments cannot be overstated."

Scottish Forestry, the government agency, and Confor, the timber industry body, said there was clear evidence that conifers stored up to four times more carbon at a faster pace than slower-growing hardwood trees. The timber industry in Scotland supported 20,000 jobs and generated £800m for the economy.

Scottish Forestry said it would study the report but added: "Public forestry grants are a vital means to stimulating woodland creation and we will continue to support funding for both conifer and broadleaf planting."

Confor said modern regulations already required conifer forests to be multipurpose, with a greater mix of species and more emphasis on eco-tourism. The World Bank had forecast the move to use timber instead of carbon-intensive concrete and steel in construction would require four times as much timber by 2050.

"Government grants provide a contribution to the cost of establishing a new forest and compensate for the loss of income from the previous land use. Once established no other grants are provided," Confor added.

"We simply don't recognise the RSE's assertions that public policy is driving the planting of as many trees as possible rather than 'the right tree in the right place'. This is not supported by an analysis of what is being planted or the public policies that sit behind tree planting."



A Treasury spokesperson confirmed forestry enjoyed tax relief and exemptions, but said: "We are committed to keeping the tax system simple by not introducing different tax-treatments for all the different types of tree in the UK."

AN article on Farming UK reported that farmers and land managers can now receive up to £11,600 per ha for planting woodland, representing a 45% increase.

A rise in England Woodland Creation Offer (EWCO) payments has been announced by Defra and the Forestry Commission. The increase in payment rates will take effect immediately, both organisations said on 18 March.

EWCO offers farmers and land managers tailored tree-planting incentives to encourage woodland creation where it is best suited.

The current maximum rate per ha available from additional contributions will increase from £8,000 to £11,600 – a 45% rise.

That will increase to £12,700 in stackable payments if the land is also eligible for the new Low Sensitivity Land Payment. Standard costs payments will remain at up to £10,200 per ha, Defra and the Forestry Commission said.

Other measures include a new payment to encourage applications on low sensitivity land, in a bid to avoid land most suitable for food production and when planting on low sensitivity land, farmers and land managers can now receive £1,100 per ha.

A new 'Nature Recovery premium' payment option (£3,300 per ha) has also been added to the Nature Recovery Additional Contribution. This is designed to encourage the planting or natural colonisation of highly bio-diverse woodlands next to ancient woodland.

Uplifts have also been made to some of the other existing additional contributions, with a focus on riparian buffers, flood mitigation and access. For example; payments for flood risk management have doubled from £500 to £1,000 per ha, and recreational access has increased from £2,200 to £3,700.

Defra and the Forestry Commission have also announced a rise in annual maintenance payments, from £350 to £400 per ha, per year, for 15 years.

Forestry Commission chief executive, Richard Stanford said: "Today's announcements make it clear that woodland creation is a compelling part of the business of land management.

"I encourage everyone eligible to take advantage of the generous woodland creation incentives now available."

Environment Minister Rebecca Pow said that while payment rates had increased for woodland planting, food security remained the government's priority.

She said: "We will continue to support our farmers and land managers to improve and conserve the natural environment and plant more trees, whilst making sure our best agricultural land is kept for food production.

UK Drax Power Station Still Burning Rare Forest Wood

By Joe Crowley for BBC Panorama

A power company that has received £6bn in UK green subsidies has kept burning wood from some of the world's most precious forests, the BBC has found. Papers obtained by Panorama show Drax took timber from rare forests in Canada it had claimed were "no-go areas". It comes as the government decides whether to give the firm's Yorkshire site billions more in environmental subsidies funded by energy bill payers. Drax says its wood pellets are "sustainable and legally harvested".

The Drax Power Station, near Selby in North Yorkshire, is a converted coal plant which burns wood pellets. In 2023, it produced about 5% of the UK's electricity. The site has become a key part of the government's drive to meet its climate targets.

Its owner, Drax, receives money from energy bill payers because the electricity produced from burning pellets is classified as renewable and treated as emission-free.

In fact, the power station emits about 12 million tonnes of carbon dioxide a year, but under international rules the UK doesn't have to count these emissions.

All of the 6.5 million tonnes of wood pellets burned by Drax each year are produced overseas. Many come from Drax's 17 pellet plants in the US and Canada.

In 2022, Panorama revealed the company had obtained logging licences in the Canadian province of British Columbia and filmed logs being taken from what the programme said was primary forest to a pellet plant owned by Drax. Primary forests are natural forests that have not been significantly disturbed by human activity.

Following the BBC investigation, Drax denied taking wood from primary forests but said it would not apply for further logging licences in the province. However, the company still takes whole logs from forests that have been cut down by timber companies.

Panorama has obtained documents from British Columbia's Ministry of Forests that show the company took more than 40,000 tonnes of wood from so-called "old-growth" forests in 2023. Old-growth is some of the oldest forest which the provincial government says provides "unique habitats, structures and ecological functions".

One example is an 87-hectare "cut block" called EM807M, located 180 miles west of the logging city of Prince George, which was all classified as old growth. Although a timber company held the licence to cut down the site, logging records show that Drax took 26% of all the harvested wood. In total, Drax received 130 lorry-loads of whole logs from the site last winter. The wood was turned into pellets and some were burned at its Yorkshire power plant.

90% of the cut block had the even higher classification of "priority deferral area". This category is for old-growth forests that are "rare,

at risk and irreplaceable", according to an independent panel of experts in British Columbia.

The experts recommended that logging should be paused in priority deferral areas, but it's still legal to cut them down. British Columbia's provincial government says it is working to ensure more old growth is deferred and protected.

Drax's use of timber from this "irreplaceable" forest was far from a one-off. Forestry documents show that in the first nine months of last year the company took wood from 30 different timber marks in British Columbia where more than 25% of the forest had been designated as old growth. Twenty-six of those timber marks included the even rarer priority deferral areas.

Timber marks - codes beaten on to wood by specially made hammers - identify all of the wood cut under individual logging licences on one or more parcels of land. The timber mark paper trail meant Panorama could track logs to Drax's pellet mills.

In total, Drax sourced about 55,000m³ of whole logs - that's more than 1,100 large truck loads - from timber marks containing old-growth forest.

coming from forestry residues and low-grade logs.

A spokesman for the company says that it keeps its sourcing policy and practices under regular review so that they "take account of evolving forest dynamics, legislation, policy, and science".

Drax says that it decided in October 2023 to stop sourcing wood from old-growth priority deferral areas, and that "work to implement this decision through the supply chain is ongoing".

The company doesn't dispute that it is still taking wood from old-growth sites that are not priority deferral areas.

The burning of wood from old-growth forests contradicts the company's previous claims. In a 2017 report about sustainability, Drax stated it would not take wood from what it called "no-go areas". It said: "We do not take from protected forests, old growth or primary forest, sites that have been classified as having a high biodiversity value."

Drax has told BBC Panorama that the 2017 document is "now obsolete" and that its current policy and practices are "more sophisticated".

The company's latest sourcing policy, published in 2019, makes no mention of protecting old growth or primary forest, instead it talks about avoiding "damage or disturbance to high carbon forest".

The UK subsidy scheme for Drax Power Station is due to end in 2027, but the government is consulting on plans to extend it to the end of the decade, which could cost bill-payers an additional £4bn.

The company says the emissions released by burning wood are offset by the planting of new trees. But critics say it takes decades for the new trees to grow and that the new forests may never be able to capture that much carbon dioxide.

Drax helps the UK government meet its climate targets because, on paper at least, the power station

is treated as emission-free. This is because international carbon accounting rules state that greenhouse gas emissions from burning wood are counted in the country where the trees are felled as opposed to where they are burned.

Any additional subsidies would be to support Drax while it tries to install carbon capture technology to reduce emissions at its power station. Previously, the government's scientific advisors on the Climate Change Committee - an independent non-departmental public body - warned that subsidies for burning wood pellets should not be extended beyond 2027.



Ecologist Michelle Connolly, from the British Columbia campaign group Conservation North, says making pellets from old forests can never be sustainable.

"Old-growth forests in British Columbia are almost gone because of 70 years of logging to feed sawmills and pulp mills, and Drax is helping push our remaining ones off the cliff, along with our native biodiversity," she says.

In response to the latest findings by the BBC, Drax admitted it has taken wood from old-growth forests, but it told Panorama that 77% of the material for its Canadian wood pellets came from sawdust and sawmill residues, with the rest

Act to Save Dartmoor Rainforest From Sheep, Urge Campaigners

By Patrick Barkham for The Guardian

THERE are acorns galore and tiny oaks sprouting from tussocky grass beside the gnarled ancient trees of Black-a-Tor Copse on the northern slopes of Dartmoor national park, but each tiny sapling grows no higher than a sheep's chin and there it stays, its new shoots and tender leaves repeatedly shorn each spring by the livestock roaming through this national nature reserve.

Guy Shrubsole, the campaigner and author of *The Lost Rainforests of Britain*, is urging the authorities to take action to save this unique fragment of ancient temperate forest.

"Overgrazing by sheep is preventing any saplings and young trees from growing on the edge of this amazing temperate rainforest, and without new trees Black-a-Tor Copse will eventually die," said Shrubsole. "We urgently need the landowner, the national park and the conservation authorities to step in and save this unique and special place."

Alongside the renowned Wistman's Wood, Black-a-Tor Copse is one of only three ancient high-altitude oak woodlands on Dartmoor, a habitat that is home to a plethora of spectacular bryophytes, lichens, and rare invertebrates including the ash-black slug and the blue ground beetle.

As Black-a-Tor Copse's oaks are growing in a severe moorland environment more than 360m above sea level, the trees do not stretch much above 6m in height and are twisted by the wind.

The 29-hectare nature reserve is a site of special scientific interest and an enigmatic relic of woodland that once covered much more of the steep-sided valleys across Dartmoor and far-western England.

Centuries of intensive grazing by cattle, sheep and ponies have left only tiny patches of woodland, which have mostly survived only because the trees grow out of boulder fields, where the large granite stones give young saplings some protection from livestock grazing.

Despite its rarity, Black-a-Tor Copse is unfenced and scores of sheep grazed on the adjacent commons wander into it, constantly nibbling the trees and ground flora. According to ecologists, some grazing is required in the wood to preserve certain plants and its unusually open character.

More than 15 years ago, after a group of ancient oak trees in the heart of wood died suddenly because of naturally occurring honey fungus, Natural England, the government's conservation watchdog that leases the nature reserve from the Duchy of Cornwall, oversaw a project to create 25 fenced areas to allow new trees to naturally regenerate.

Faced with the challenge of transporting 100 fence posts and 300m of plastic netting two miles from the nearest road, the army – which uses adjacent areas of the moor as firing ranges – stepped in and helicoptered the fencing into position.



The fenced areas helped saplings grow without being grazed by sheep but the "exclosures" were removed in 2010-11 because they were no longer sheep-proof. Today, the few young trees that survive the incessant sheep grazing are permanently stunted by repeated browsing by the animals.

Shrubsole, who is campaigning for Britain's temperate rainforests to be helped to grow and expand, called for the reinstatement of fenced areas to enable young oaks to grow up and the wood to regenerate.

"Black-a-Tor Copse used to be much larger than it is today – we know from Tudor-era records that it used to stretch further along the valley, but an area was felled for firewood," he said. "We urgently need to let this fragment of temperate rainforest expand and become more resilient to the climate crisis and outbreaks of disease."

"Dartmoor's steep river valleys and boulder fields could be supporting lots more woods like these – but that won't happen unless we prevent sheep from the surrounding commons eating all the young trees."

According to Natural England, there are no plans to build new exclosures to protect young trees in the wood.

Wesley Smyth, Natural England's deputy director for the Devon area, said: "While grazing animals has impacted tree and shrub regeneration at Black-a-Tor, it is one of a range of factors such as honey fungus that have contributed to its current condition, and some grazing will continue to be needed in the woodland to preserve its unique flora and

characteristics. We are working closely with the Duchy of Cornwall and commoners to manage this shared landscape in a way that secures a long-term, sustainable future for Black-a-Tor copse and its wildlife."

Prince William last year announced plans for the Duchy of Cornwall to double the size of Wistman's Wood, a 7.4-acre fragment of ancient rainforest that is increasingly popular with visitors. The royal estate will allow the wood to regenerate naturally by reducing cattle grazing, improving footpaths so the public do not stray into sensitive areas of regenerating woodland and plant new trees from seed collected in the wood.

A spokesperson for the Duchy of Cornwall said: "Black-a-Tor Copse, much like Wistman's Wood, is a very special place for nature. Protecting and restoring these types of habitats is one of our top priorities and we work closely with farm tenants and other partners to deliver a wide range of environmental management and enhancement."

"Having commenced the expansion of Wistman's Wood last year, we are now working closely with Natural England on a plan to further enhance Black-a-Tor Copse. We will ensure that those using the area are fully engaged in the ongoing discussions."

Shrubsole added: "It's wonderful what the Duchy are doing at Wistman's Wood. The obvious next step is to replicate that work at the second rainforest they own."

Climate Change Experts Have 'Serious Concerns' at Tree Planting Cut

By Kevin Keane, BBC Scotland's Environment Correspondent

THE Scottish government's climate change advisers have raised "serious concerns" about cuts to tree planting. It was announced in December that the woodland creation budget was being slashed by 41% from £77.2m to £45.4m. Ministers have admitted the cut means they will fall well short of next year's target of 18,000 hectares of new woodland to tackle climate change.

The Scottish government has blamed the decision on cuts to the block grant from Westminster.

The forestry sector said the decision will mean millions of small trees which have been growing in nurseries ready for planting will have to be destroyed.

The Confederation of Forest Industries (Confor) wrote to the Climate Change Committee (CCC) seeking its advice on the decision. The committee provides independent expert advice to both the Scottish and UK governments over their plans to tackle global warming.

In response to the letter, CCC chief executive Chris Stark said any delay in tree planting would risk not achieving the reductions in greenhouse gas emissions which are required to meet targets in the 2030s and beyond.

He added that the budget cuts "represent a continued gap in Scotland meeting its tree planting ambition" and that the committee has "serious concerns" about the plans.

Stuart Goodall, chief executive of Confor, said the industry will take many years to regain the confidence to invest. He added: "It is vital



that in the coming weeks, Scotland's government listens to the CCC and works with Confor and the Woodland Trust to find a funding solution."

New tree planting is a crucial component in tackling greenhouse gas emissions because they soak up the planet-warming gas carbon dioxide, but there's a time lag between planting trees and that natural process significantly kicking in.

The committee had previously advised that Scotland needs to be planting 15,000 hectare of new woodlands each year from 2025.

Previous annual targets have been consistently missed with planting rates in 2022/23 only reaching 8,200 hectares.

Ministers say the budget for 2024/25 will allow for only 9,000 hectares of new woodlands, although they point out that Scotland's contribution is still larger than that of the rest of the UK combined.

Opposition parties have condemned the cuts to the woodland creation budget with the Liberal Democrat MSP Willie Rennie submitting a motion urging a rethink. The motion has been supported by Labour and Conservative MSPs.

Mr Rennie said: "The Scottish government's cuts to woodland creation are another ill-considered decision that will have negative effects further down the road. Expanding forestry can be a win-win, trapping carbon and restoring habitats for native wildlife."

The Scottish government's Rural Affairs Secretary Mairi Gougeon said: "To grow our woodland resource and tackle climate change takes funding, yet the UK government has reduced the capital spend to Scotland by 10% and this has had serious knock on effects for woodland creation."

"I would welcome the committee's support in seeking further funding from the UK government so that we can all get more trees in the ground and tackle climate change and nature loss."

Plans for New Norfolk Wetland and Woodland

By Owen Sennitt, Eastern Daily Press Local Democracy Reporter

A new 22-acre wetland and woodland habitat could be created near a Norfolk town which would protect it from becoming a housing development. Freebridge Community Housing wants to create the space on land in Gaywood, north of King's Lynn, which it says will be a "space for everyone".

It is part of the housing association's plans to reach Net Zero - a commitment to reduce the amount of CO₂ emissions it produces through its developments and maintenance of homes.

In a presentation to West Norfolk Council members last month, Steven Ellmore, energy and sustainability manager, said: "This land will not be for development but an opportunity for us to do something for the environment and community."

"At the heart of the strategy is strengthening local biodiversity and ecosystems. It will also be a space that people can use to connect with nature to improve health and wellbeing."

The proposal will see nearly 22 acres of land south of the Gaywood River turned into a



combined wetland habitat with native woodland and meadow grassland, which it says will create diverse new habitats.

A community and education hub may also

be created to provide a space for schools and locals to learn more about the scheme.

The proposal gained support from members of the environment and community panel when the plans were revealed.

Rob Colwell, councillor for Gaywood South, said: "Finally some good news for the Gaywood river catchment, which has been an environmental concern for too long. It is exciting for local residents who will gain from the health benefits of getting closer to nature."

Freebridge say the plans are at an early stage but they are committed to purchasing the land and delivering the project.

Other plans announced by Freebridge to achieve Net Zero include retrofitting homes they manage with better insulation.

It has gained £2.7m in funding for these projects.

When Wind Turbine Blades Get Old What's Next?

Michael Winrow, BBC Technology of Business Reporter

THE cranes moved in last year at Hagshaw Hill, Scotland's oldest commercial wind farm. They were there to continue the dismantling of wind turbines that had been generating electricity for the last 28 years. A similar scene can be witnessed across the world as the first wave of wind turbines built in the late 1990s and early 2000s are decommissioned.

In the case of Hagshaw Hill, the existing turbines will be replaced with taller and more efficient ones that can generate up to 10 times more electricity.

However, working out what to do with the old turbines is challenging. Between 85 and 95% of a turbine's materials, such as steel, aluminium, and copper, can be easily recycled, but the blades are a different matter.

Made of fibreglass they are covered with a tough epoxy resin, designed to withstand years of hammering by the elements. These durable qualities make breaking down the blades for recycling a tricky process.

Traditional solutions include using pieces of decommissioned blades in cement kilns to manufacture cement, though this can be an energy intensive process.

Blades are also commonly disposed of in landfill sites, but this option is becoming increasingly less feasible with a number of countries, notably Germany and the Netherlands, banning the practice.

Innovative solutions such as repurposing blades into playgrounds or bike sheds have been shown to be effective at a local level but, with some experts predicting up to 43 million tonnes of wind turbine blade waste by 2050, there is a pressing need for a system that will work on a bigger scale.

Scientists and start-ups are working on the problem, with many focusing on tackling the challenge of breaking down the materials used

in the blades.

"At the end of life, if we're going to get any value out of the materials, we need to be able to separate the fibres from the resin in some way or another," Dr Claire Barlow, a sustainability and materials engineer, from the University of Cambridge tells me.

One approach showing promise uses a technique developed by the University of Strathclyde. It involves breaking the blades down into small pieces and feeding them into a very hot air stream.

The process separates the glass fibre from the resin. The glass fibre can then be collected, treated and reused, explains Malcolm Forsyth who leads Project PRoGrESS, which aims to commercialise the technology.

The project, which kicked off in 2022, is working on a pilot plant that's due to be operational in the first half of this year - though it's hit some difficulties.

"The major challenge for the project team has been the rapid escalation of material costs partly due to the Russia and Ukraine war, as well as global inflation," according to Mr Forsyth.

Similar solutions are being tested elsewhere that use different methodologies but have the same overarching goal of breaking down the materials used in wind turbine blades.

Danish company Vestas, the largest wind turbine producer in Europe, announced last year an approach that uses a liquid chemical solution to break down the blades into materials which can then potentially be used to make new blades.

A major advantage of this approach, according to Vestas, is that it uses widely available chemicals, though details haven't been disclosed. The process has the added benefit of not requiring energy-intensive high temperatures.

Both of these traits hint at potential scalability, with the company claiming to have recycled 475 end-of-life blades in 2022.

If technologies such as these succeed "then not only can we solve the problem of new waste coming through, but we can also actually tackle historic waste," according to Dr Barlow.

Historic blade waste currently in landfill could be recycled, as could waste which has been placed in storage awaiting a solution.

At Hagshaw Hill a number of wind turbines have been kept in storage while ScottishPower Renewables decides what to do with them.

Perhaps the future will be to make turbine blades that are easier to break down.

A number of companies are working on building blades made out of materials less reliant on the difficult to recycle fibreglass and epoxy resin. However at this stage, the vast majority of blades continue to be made of these traditional materials.

The next few years will determine whether the recycling technology under development can be scaled-up to a useful size, without harming the environment.

As Dr Barlow puts it "that really is the silver bullet."

Dr Andrew Boswell Urged to Abandon A47 Supreme Court Bid

By Dan Grimmer for the Eastern Daily Press

A climate activist who has "cost taxpayers tens of millions of pounds" by bringing a string of legal challenges to upgrade works on the A47 is coming under pressure to abandon his latest case. George Freeman and Jerome Mayhew, both MPs for affected constituencies, have urged Dr Andrew Boswell to abandon his legal fight and reimburse the public for the cost of his campaign.

The former Green councillor has already seen his crowd-funded case thrown out by judges at the High Court and the Court of Appeal, who told him that it has "no logical basis" and "an air of complete unreality".

However, despite these humiliating

setbacks, Dr Boswell - whose crowdfunding for his legal battle has brought in almost £70,000 - is trying to get the case heard again and has instructed solicitors to apply for appeal to the Supreme Court.

He argues the cumulative impact of the

upgrade schemes - dualling between Blofield and North Burlingham, Easton to North Tuddenham and the Thickthorn roundabout revamp - has not been properly considered.

The delays caused by his unsuccessful legal challenges have delayed the projects by

20 months and added tens of millions of pounds to their cost, as a result of inflation.

Mr Freeman, MP for Mid Norfolk, said: "This has dragged on too long. All of us who use the A47 are paying the price for Mr Boswell's need to make a point. On behalf of the people of Mid Norfolk and all of us who have campaigned for years for dualling this road, I urge him to drop it.

"There is nothing 'green' about congestion, pollution, accidents and flooding on the old A47. It needs dualling."

Mr Mayhew said: "Judges have already told him that his claim has an 'air of complete

unreality' and has 'no logical basis'. Perhaps this is why Dr Boswell has not used his own money to fund his claim, yet he's prepared to put tens of millions onto the final bill for the road and cause immense frustration for commuters.

"I would like to see Dr Boswell, or his Green Party supporters, commit to reimbursing the taxpayer for the increased costs if his claim is thrown out yet again. Perhaps he would think twice if he felt responsible for the money he is wasting."

Dr Boswell is not available for comment, but his solicitors have said the cumulative impact of

climate impact is a crucial issue.

Matthew McFeeley, solicitor at Richard Buxton Solicitors, said: "This has broad implications for infrastructure projects and their compatibility with the government's climate commitments. This is an issue of wide public importance and we are therefore asking the Supreme Court to weigh in."

Editor's comment - Dr Boswell has done nothing wrong. He has simply exercised his right to object. Perhaps Messrs Freeman and Mayhew should consider how much money this government has wasted!!

Studies Still Uncovering True Extent of 2019-20 Australia Wildfire Catastrophe

An article by Mongabay Haze Beat

FRESH research published in early 2024 continues to uncover the true cost on biodiversity, the economy and public health triggered by unprecedented wildfires that swept Australia in late 2019 and early 2020. "These results are an illustration of what can be expected in the future not only in Australia, but in other nations that are vulnerable to climate-change driven disasters," said Vivienne Reiner, the lead author of an economic study published in the journal *Economics of Disasters and Climate Change*.

On 31 January Reiner and colleagues published the results of their input-output study, a standardised method of assessing changes to goods and services in an economy.

The researchers found that the catastrophic fires likely erased A\$2.8 billion (£1.456 billion) from output in Australia's tourism sector, an amount greater than the economy of Guinea-Bissau, according to World Bank calculations of the West African country of more than 2 million people.

The input-output study was the first occasion in which researchers have documented changes throughout Australia's entire supply chain. As a result, the researchers' A\$2.8 billion (£1.456 billion) conclusion represented a 61% increase on the direct damages previously identified to tourism as a result of the fires.

This total cost of the bushfires to tourism determined by Reiner and colleagues was higher than the amount Australia will spend over five years on increases to rent assistance for 1.1 million low-income households, according to Australia's current national budget.

"I expect that the impact of the globally unprecedented 2019-20 bushfires in Australia could continue to be felt for years," Reiner told Mongabay in an email. "One sector that suffered substantial destruction was forestry. This is not only a major employer in many rural areas but recovery is challenging. It takes about 25 years for a tree to grow for harvest and of course the environmental impact (and on animals) was devastating."

In addition, the researchers estimated more than 7,000 jobs went up in smoke amid cancellations to bookings.

The first fires in the Australia's 2019-20 bushfire season were reported in September 2019, but peak activity occurred through

December and into the New Year.

As Reiner's research illustrated the staggering cost wrought by the fires, a health impact assessment published in the journal *Heliyon* showed that over the last two decades one person died every five days in Australia as a consequence of air pollution across the country of 26.5 million.

"Sydney and Melbourne reported the highest number of deaths attributable to extreme air pollution events, with 541 and 438 deaths respectively, followed by Brisbane and Perth with 171 and 132 deaths," said Lucas Hertzog at Curtin University's World Health Organization Collaborating Centre for Climate Change and Health Impact Assessment.

Then-prime minister Scott Morrison told parliament in February 2020 that the fires had killed 33 people, including nine firefighters. More than 3,000 homes were destroyed by wildfires.

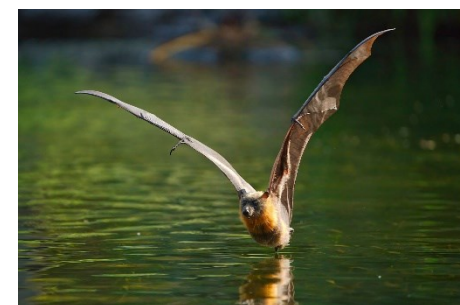
Anecdotal testimony indicates lasting psychological harm among those exposed to fires, while clinicians say they expect some long-term health impacts among Australians exposed to smoke.

The fires devastated numerous nature reserves, including more than 80% of the Blue Mountains, a UNESCO World Heritage Site located west of Sydney in New South Wales state.

The 2019-20 fires burned with unprecedented intensity through a total of 59 million acres, an area the size of the UK, and killed or displaced up to 1.5 billion animals, according to research published in 2021.

A study published in the April 2024 edition of *Global Ecology and Conservation* shows that 15% of all known roosting locations of the gray-headed flying fox (*Pteropus poliocephalus*) may have been directly impacted by the 2019-20 fires, suggesting previous estimates of impacts on the bat have been underestimates.

The largest bat in Australia and native to the country's east, the gray-headed flying fox is



listed as vulnerable on the IUCN Red List.

"Whilst it remains unknown how many flying-foxes died in the fires, the number and geographic span of roosts affected and the severities with which those roosts were burnt emphasise the importance of bushfires as an emerging threat for this vulnerable species," the authors concluded.

Prior to the latest cluster of publication on Australia's 2019-20 bushfire season, scientists had demonstrated that these fires likely had devastating global consequences.

A study published in 2023 in the journal *Science Advances* showed that biomass burned in the Australian bush circumnavigated the planet in around one month, brightened the clouds and caused a cooling effect over the Pacific Ocean.

The authors showed that this cooling effect likely tipped the planet into a La Niña climate pattern lasting almost three years, a phenomenon previously attributed only to major volcanic eruptions.

"We were quite surprised as, to our knowledge, this is the first study to document the triggering of an ENSO [El Niño-Southern Oscillation] event by wildfire emissions," John Fasullo at the US-based National Center for Atmospheric Research (NCAR), told Mongabay last year.

Saving Our Trees and Woodland

NEIL SHAW, Network Content Editor (Live and Trends) for WalesOnline, reported that a teacher has saved over 80 ancient trees from HS2 after spotting little yellow dots on the trunks which meant they were due for the chop. Carol-Anne O'Callaghan was renting a Grade II listed farmhouse on the corner of Leather Lane, a tree lined ancient Holloway in Great Missenden, Buckinghamshire.

She spotted marks on the trees left by HS2 workers, meaning they had been earmarked to be cut down, but swiftly discovered they were a vital wildlife habitat for a rare bat species. During 2021 Carol-Anne then began tirelessly working on a campaign to save the ancient oak trees from the HS2 route.

After leading the movement with help from her daughter, Blaize, they created a fundraiser 'Save Leather Lane Oaks' which has raised £40,000. Since creating the grassroots campaign group, no veteran oaks, apart from those removed for the track and haul road, have been removed, leaving "a green corridor" amidst barren land.

Carol-Anne says at least 80 trees that would have been cut down have so far been saved.

Carol-Anne said: "I didn't know anything about starting a campaign at first, but now I know how to write legal environmental reports, all about the HS2 Environmental Statement and the mitigation hierarchy and have read the Design Manual for Bridges and Roads many times. 'I just knew that to take 100 oak trees was wrong. I couldn't sit by and watch it happen.'"

Carol-Anne has dedicated three years of her life to saving these ancient trees and precious wildlife amidst personal tragedy, losing her mum, father and sister. She has been named a "Guardian Angel" by The Guardian Newspaper in recognition of her dedication to protecting nature threatened by HS2.

When walking her dog one day in 2021, Carol-Anne spotted a series of yellow dots painted on the towering oak trees. Planted in the 19th century, Carol-Anne says the trees, ancient hedgerows and woodland floors have played an integral role in the formation of countryside landscape.

However, one tree holds a special place in her heart. She named it Ilona. Carol-Anne said "I chose that name not only because it personifies her as standing alone, but also because in Finnish it means 'as a joy to someone'. She is my beloved Ilona, a majestic oak tree that proudly stands at the top of the hill, overlooking the valley beyond".

Carol-Anne says she had never partaken in any active campaigning before this. Raised as a 'straight-edge' Catholic and being a deputy head teacher who never strayed from the rules and 'did everything she was told', she admitted: "Previously I had no idea about HS2's impact on nature and I was ignorant about the environmental harm.

"I had moved up from Essex. HS2 seemed like a distant concern to people living there. I knew HS2 had been enormous expenditure, but I am now ashamed to say that I was one of many who didn't get the nature of the devastation that came with that. It's the mindset. "It's not on my doorstep, I don't need to know'."

After Carol-Anne spotted these mysterious dots, she called HS2 who explained they were in the process of preparing groundworks for a track line so were clearing 'vegetation'. Carol-Anne said: "I was appalled HS2 were felling 99 oak trees and Ilona for a temporary haul road



and track. In addition, why on south side of Leather Lane where all the trees and biodiversity were and not the north side where there were absolutely no trees.

"I knew it was wrong and spoke up about it, to make the decision makers accountable and the ridiculous situation public." Unimpressed with HS2's answers, Carol-Anne went to a neighbour who was fearful not only for the ancient oaks but also for the wildlife reliant upon these trees.

She explained: "My neighbour knew there were bats there. She had bat boxes in the trees. I knew something was wrong here. Why were they taking all the trees in a one kilometre line for a track cutting only 90 metres wide?"

"And I was just thinking why did Ilona have to go when she was over 30 metres away from the cutting. There was no sense to it."

Carol-Anne soon discovered HS2 were planning to take all the trees in order to install a new two lane road and overbridge over the HS2 track to replace the existing single track lane. Local activists engaged to protect the trees from felling but were evicted when the road was declared closed on 17 March for 'vegetation clearance', which Carol-Anne says was HS2's code for felling all the oak trees in the lane.

Carol-Anne began putting letters through doors of Potter Row (which runs perpendicular to Leather Lane) telling residents to 'toot your salute' in support of saving the oaks, driving up and down Potter Row. Carol-Anne said: "People were tooting their horns to the trees whenever they drove along. It was the sound of people making our voices heard as the trees couldn't speak for themselves."

They created an online petition which gained over 43,000 supporters alerting HS2 to their concerns and set themselves up as a residents' conservation group (LLCG).

Carol-Anne said: "We conducted a bat survey to send to Bucks Council, but when we submitted a Freedom of Information request to see what bat surveys had been undertaken by HS2's Contractors, they sent our own bat survey back to us! It appeared they hadn't got one of their own. This fired me up as I am passionate about people doing the right thing and here HS2 had not followed their own Environmental Statement and thought they could get away with it."

The campaign used Lindsley Spinks, from Lawyers for Nature, and Buxtons Solicitors, and forced HS2 to stop felling.

LLCG set their fundraiser to £40k after costs

accelerated, with Carol-Anne explaining: "About a quarter went on legal fees, £15,000 went to an engineer, £10,000 to the ecologist.

"The money helped us provide detailed engineering and topographical surveys to present detailed alternative over-road designs to EKFB, provide research, reporting and designs for a permanent green crossing for the bats - and ongoing monitoring of the bat corridor with expert support."

Over the last two years, Carol-Anne, Jim and their third team member, have established LLCG, and have carried out free monthly bat walks for local residents, events that get quickly over-subscribed and demonstrate the local interest in bat ecology.

She said: "The bat walks have not only highlighted the importance of retaining the oaks that create the bat commuting corridor at Leather Lane, but also the fact that local residents support our work and want to know more about bat conservation themselves."

Since September 2023, it was announced the construction group Align would be taking over work at Leather Lane.

It was another step in the right direction for LLCG - Carol-Anne and the team have been included in discussions between Align and Bucks council to implement positive designs for mitigation and limitation of damage to the wildlife corridor at the track crossing in Leather Lane - based on LLCG's ecological research.

Carol-Anne said: "The first thing Align have done is to engage with LLCG, as well as the parish councils and Bucks Council.

"Our heads have come together. It is a joining of ideas and forces which shows collaboration in a cooperative way. Being inclusive and talking to everyone. It's a win-win situation".

After working with Bucks council, the local parish council, the Chiltern Conservation Board, the Woodland Trust, and receiving support from their local green MP Sarah Green, the grass-roots campaign group were able to make Align aware of their aims in protecting the rare bat species and the veteran oaks, including Ilona.

Now LLCG has evolved, Carol-Anne and the team are working towards turning the movement into a charity, potentially turning the remaining green spaces after construction work has finished at Leather Lane into a conservation area for plant and wildlife, including bats.

There lies unlimited potential in how this can grow into a space for environmental education and appreciation for all generations. A spokesperson for HS2 said: "HS2 is delivering 33 km² of new wildlife habitat alongside the railway including over 7 million trees and shrubs.

"At Leather Lane, we are looking at a number of options for how to take the road over the cutting which will carry the railway north from the Chiltern tunnel towards Wendover. This design work is based on extensive surveys of the local bat population carried out over more than two years."

Editor's comment – This is a wonderful example of what can be achieved with a bit of effort and determination. Great stuff!!

H EATHER CARRICK reported for NationalWorld that a hooded man was caught on camera chopping down a tree outside of a homeowner's property after an argument over birdfeeders. Residents of a block of flats in Ilford, east London watched on in horror as the man stood chopping the three-storey tree for a whopping five hours, according to those within the flats.

The tree stood in a communal area outside of the flats, until the hooded figure chopped it down on 14 February. The man was filmed as he chopped the tree down and pulled birdfeeders and decorations from the branches. Police have also been contacted over the incident.

A neighbour, who filmed the hooded figure as they chopped the tree down, said: "It's crazy. He was just running around with an axe. He said the council told him to do it, which isn't true, but who is going to challenge him while he's there swinging his axe? Clarion, who own the estate, had just been and tidied up the tree a few weeks earlier.

"All the neighbours are really upset and it's pretty scary too. It was a lovely tree and we all took real good care of it. We're all gutted."

The neighbour, who remained unnamed, said that the tree was an important piece of nature for the residents of the flats, with many coming to decorate the branches during Christmas and the festive period.

He added: "We used to look out at the tree and birds flying all around it but now we can just see buildings. I'm sure he didn't like the little trinkets because he spent a lot of time smashing them up. It's really sad. We all loved that tree and we can't get it back."

A Clarion spokesperson said: "Our local neighbourhood team was alerted to a man cutting a tree on the Bracken Court estate in Ilford on the afternoon of Wednesday 14 February. After it was established that this was not a Clarion planned work, we inspected the area and found the remains of the tree were a hazard. To make the area safe we completely removed the tree."

A Metropolitan police spokesperson said: "This has been recorded as an allegation of criminal damage and officers have made an appointment to visit the person who made the report to obtain further details."

E LEANOR BURLEIGH, digital reporter for Bucks Free Press, reported that villagers are celebrating saving a 'beautiful' 100-year-old oak tree from being felled as part of a nearby housing development.

A 100-year-old oak tree on Cappens Lane in Walter's Ash was first put at risk of felling when Buckinghamshire Council gave housing developer Dandara permission to build dozens of new homes in the area back in November 2020.

Plans were put forward to cut down the tree and install a public footpath between the housing development and Main Road in its place, but members of the Naphill and Walters Ash Residents' Association vehemently opposed the idea, describing it as a "brutal and unnecessary act of environmental vandalism".

Now, more than three years on, residents have won their long-fought battle to keep the 100-year-old standing, with their efforts including a petition that attracted over a thousand signatures and banners with messages including 'Save me from the chop'.

On 13 January, a sign asking for the tree to be saved was symbolically removed from its

trunk in what Gloria Leflaive, a member of the residents' association, described as a "joyful" ceremony which followed many months of work and petitioning of Buckinghamshire Council and Dandara.

The felling plans were shelved thanks to another resident, Jim Waters, who offered part of his front garden for a footpath ensuring safe passage around the historic oak, and Gloria said fellow association member Usha Prashar was also instrumental in taking the campaign over the finishing line.

She added: "Our beautiful 100-year-old Clappins Oak will hopefully now enjoy another 200 years of environmentally valuable life and remain a dominant landmark in Clappins Lane."

C LOSER to home, Maria Alejandra Trujillo reported on bnn, The People's Network, that a revised Thorpe St Andrew housing project has seen homes reduced from 725 to 555, preserving ancient woodland

Following extensive local protests the project, initially set to encompass 725 homes across four sites, has seen a reduction to 555 homes, addressing community and environmental concerns.

The development prioritizes the preservation of eight hectares of ancient woodland and an ice-age pit, reflecting a growing sensitivity towards ecological and heritage sites in urban planning.

The revision of the housing plans for Pinebanks, Langley North, Langley South, and Griffin Lane comes after a concerted campaign by the Friends of Thorpe St Andrew and local county councillor Ian Mackie. Their efforts have culminated in a proposal that not only reduces the number of homes but also ensures the protection of vital green spaces. This move has been hailed as a victory for local campaigning, showcasing the power of community action in influencing developmental outcomes.

The journey to this point has been long, with the original plans approved by Broadland District Council in 2013 facing immediate backlash. Concerns ranged from the sheer number of homes to the potential damage to Thorpe St Andrew's cherished heritage sites.



The revised plans, set for review by Broadland's planning committee in the summer, indicate a shift towards more sustainable and community-friendly urban development. This includes securing the future of the woodland as a wildlife reserve and offering opportunities for local involvement, despite the ongoing pressures of development.

The reduction in housing and the focus on environmental conservation marks a significant step forward for the Thorpe St Andrew community. While the revised plans still signify change, they do so with a greater emphasis on protecting the area's natural and historical assets.

The development, once a source of contention, now presents an opportunity for positive growth, balancing the need for new homes with the imperative to preserve local heritage and biodiversity.

The impact of these revised plans on Thorpe St Andrew and its residents will be profound. As the development moves forward, it does so with a renewed commitment to sustainability and community values.

This approach not only addresses immediate concerns but also sets a precedent for future urban development projects, where the voices of local communities and the importance of environmental conservation are given precedence.

W RITING for the Great Yarmouth Mercury, Owen Sennitt reported that Crabbett's Marsh - a secluded area just off the River Bure in Horning - has been granted a Tree Protection Order by the Broads Authority as part of efforts to conserve the habitat.

It means anyone found to be clearing the woodland would be liable for prosecution which could result in a fine of up to £20,000.

It follows reports of land owners cutting through sections of the woodland to gain access to the water, collecting logs and also creating space for driveways.



However, the move has been met with a number of objections from property owners in the woodland site, who argued the order would be "in contravention" of the BA's responsibility to maintain navigation of the waterways, because the trees can block dykes through the marsh.

An objector also questioned whether the BA had the authority to serve a TPO, attacking the public body for being "unelected, unaccountable and policing themselves".

Speaking at a planning committee meeting, Richard Jeffries, who owns a property within Crabbett's Marsh, argued the order would cover an area within his garden, accusing the BA of "shoddy homework".

However, members of the BA were eager to help protect the woodland. They agreed that it contributed greatly to the amenity of the area and that it was an important ecosystem.

Tim Jickells, a former professor specialising in marine science, urged the BA to do "everything it can to preserve this fabulous place".

There were concerns that enforcement could be difficult as much of the woodland is not accessible to the public, but the BA agreed to speak with property owners to raise awareness about the need to protect the woodland.

T EWKESBURY Borough Council successfully pursued a prosecution after 100 protected trees were damaged on land at Warren Fruit Farm last year.

At a hearing at Cheltenham Magistrates Court on 19 February, Mr Michael Keeley, pleaded guilty to damaging a number of trees at Warren Fruit Farm, Evesham Road, Greet.

In February 2023, following trench excavation by a mini digger to bury overground service

cables, the root system of 108 Lombardy poplar trees were damaged. The row of trees at the fruit farm which adjoins the B4078 is subject to a Tree Preservation Order (TPO). Formal permission should have been obtained before the work which would have included guidance to limit root damage, but this was neglected.

Mr Keeley was fined £1,600, reduced from £2,500 for an early guilty plea, and ordered to pay an additional £1,569 in costs plus a victim surcharge of £640, totalling £3,809.

Mr Keeley explained that although he did not own the land at the time the works were undertaken, that he was responsible for the works that caused the damage and that it was not his intention to damage the trees, for which he apologised.

Cllr Sarah Hands lead member for clean and green said: "We have one of the most impressive landscapes in Gloucestershire and we won't hesitate to protect tree stocks as it aligns with our net zero and ecology ambitions."

"My thanks to all of the council's planning compliance, counter fraud and enforcement unit officers as well as One Legal who worked on this case for their diligence. I hope the result will act as a deterrent to anyone who is considering acting illegally in Tewkesbury Borough."

"Anyone who is thinking about having work on trees on their property or is concerned about trees near them, should first check with the council to ensure the tree is not subject to a preservation order."

SHANNON Mower reported for Doncaster Free Press that campaigners against a controversial housing estate on a Doncaster beauty spot have said the plans undermine the mayor's tree planting initiative.

Residents near Rose Hill in Bessacarr have continued their opposition to plans for 121 homes on the green space which were approved last year, stating that they undermine Doncaster Council's latest green campaign.

The plans by Miller Homes were first rejected by councillors in March, after which the application was resubmitted with almost identical plans.

In November, the planning committee approved the plans in a U-turn after a discussion from which the public and press were excluded.

Residents and local councillors had opposed the plans due to the site being home to several hundred trees and biodiverse woodland habitats. Locals formed the Rose Hill Residents' Association (RHRA), who continue their campaign to overturn the plans before construction begins.

During March, the council held a giveaway of hundreds of trees as part of Mayor Ros Jones' initiative to plant one million trees by 2031. Members of the RHRA have expressed anger over the initiative taking place while trees are set to be destroyed on Rose Hill.

Richard Farthing, Chairman of the RHRA, said "We fully support the mayor's tree-planting initiative. In fact many residents, including myself, have signed up for a free tree because we know how important it is to protect the trees we have and plant more."

"We don't understand though how allowing Miller Homes to destroy 100s of already grown trees and woodland on Rose Hill can possibly help tackle the climate crisis."

"It seems to us that council planners working for Mayor Jones don't share her views on the importance of trees in tackling climate change, or the value of wildlife habitat in protecting biodiversity."

"Neither planners nor Miller Homes appear

to know how many trees will be destroyed by this development and they don't seem to care."

"At the recent appeal hearing, when the inspector asked them why they hadn't counted the trees on site, they said it was because it was too difficult, but what's difficult about counting the number of trees growing on a field?"

Tree experts have since conducted surveys on behalf of the RHRA, counting around 1,000 trees on the site. RHRA member Wendy Wright added: "Trees and woodland on Rose Hill have a lot of value, not just to wildlife and in tackling the climate emergency but also to local people who enjoy walking in this beautiful green space."

Resident Derek Brook added: "There's a tree just over the other side of our fence that we've watched grow from a sapling into a large beautiful tree over the past 30 or so years. They could easily protect this tree, but like all the other trees, they don't care about it and will have it chopped down."

Miller Homes have defended the plans, noting that they incorporate 35% green open space and street tree planting.

A Bessacarr resident is set to launch legal action against the council with aim to reverse the application, claiming that they failed to follow its Local Plan.

WRITING for the Daily Mail, Matt Adams reported that neighbours fighting plans to develop a woodland oasis say they have received anonymous phone calls warning them to back off.

Rooks Wood, a pocket of green space nestled between country cottages in the depths of Hertfordshire, has been proposed as the site for a four-bedroom eco-house, much to the disgust of local residents.

That's because the Green Belt land has been woodland for generations, and attracts a variety of birds and wildlife including foxes, badgers, woodpeckers, nuthatches and treecreepers.

However, the owner of the 3.2 hectare site, a former local estate agent, now wants to cut down protected trees more than 100 years old to build a 'passive' house in the heart of the woods, something villagers in Thorley Lane East, Bishop's Stortford, believe is a step too far.

They have formed a grassroots campaign, Thorley Lane East Woods Action Group, to prevent the wildlife haven from being developed, with more than 450 people now involved.

Campaign leader Gill Gill, who lives next to Rooks Wood, said she has been at the brunt of anonymous warnings to stop getting involved: "They threatened me on the telephone, saying they knew where I lived, they knew who my house was mortgaged with, they knew my business and I ought to watch out or there would be personal consequences."

"Somebody came to the door asking questions about the campaign, and the next day I received another phone call describing the inside of my house. It's just ridiculous, all over trying to protect this woodland. We're not doing anything other than raising awareness of what is happening in an area where it shouldn't be happening."

She explained her reasons for fighting the development: "This is the last untouched green space in the area. It used to be part of the hunting grounds of a nearby manor house, and underneath the ground is actually an old ice house. It's so important that these green spaces are not lost."

"The owner's argument is that we're short of housing in the area, but at the other end of the lane are 700 houses being built, so one four-bedroom eco-house is not going to solve East

Herts' housing problem."

When the land was purchased several years ago, there was a failed bid to carve it up into lots for auction and development, but now the plan is to build just one property. However, access is restricted by a water-filled ditch running around the perimeter of the site which belongs to the highway authority.

Local wildlife expert Andy Kenworthy said: "If it was developed it would mean the disturbance of yet another local green space. It's such a sensitive area, a little gem that has survived amidst all of this housing. For example, just a few weeks ago all of the ground was covered with snowdrops."



Karen Schilder lives nearby: "It's so heartbreaking when you've got an area like this where people are contemplating razing it to the ground. Something's got to stop."

"There have been so many unsavoury incidents. The police have been involved; we've had our car vandalised. It's very disappointing."

Dr Graeme Smith, whose home is around the corner to the threatened woods, said: "It's just another green space on the edge of lots of housing that doesn't need to be used for building. If you look around Bishop's Stortford there's over 3,500 new houses being built on the Green Belt, they don't need to take more land away from us that was actually put aside for woodland."

Other residents have commented on the planning application, including Michael Firth, who warned: "This would clearly not end here. As soon as one house is built, planners will be encouraged to approve other builds in the same area, having set a precedent and proved the 'viability' of the scheme. Do not let a natural bit of forest become another housing estate with a few cherry-picked carefully curated 'mature' trees left as a token gesture."

MILES DAVIS, BBC Political Reporter, Devon, reported that more than 40 trees were cut down in an historical seaside garden due to the absence of a plan and poor communication, a report found.



The iconic palm trees were chopped down in the Italian Gardens in Torquay in preparation for the site's centenary. A report from Torbay Council into what went wrong found that its maintenance firm Swisco felled the trees without the council being aware. The council said "very serious and substantial learning has taken place".

Torbay Council's investigation into the felling of the trees reported the incident "generated considerable local, regional and national media coverage as well as strong reactions from local residents and visitors".

The council's report said there were "preliminary discussions" of ideas for the Italian Gardens in 2019/20. The report found there "was no final plan" and any emerging plan was "put in abeyance through budget pressures, the pandemic and the setup of SWISCo", which started operating in July 2020.

The report said: "What is not clear from the available records is the extent to which the proposal to remove the palm trees was known and by whom."

By the autumn of 2023 Swisco staff had developed plans to get rid of the palm trees but did not share the plans with the Swisco managing director or the relevant Torbay Council cabinet holder, Adam Billings.

Mr Billings said the removal of the trees "was not planned or communicated to the expected standard".

The report found most of the palms removed were about 50 years old and "displaying signs of advanced decline".

The council said it was important to note there were no palms present in the Italian Gardens when it was first planted in 1924.

A new garden is being planted with about 1,600 new plants and will include direct replacements for some of the palms, together with the addition of more than 100 topiary yew trees.

PROTESTERS are relieved after officers intervened to stop the illegal felling of trees at a city nature park. Oxford City Council had intended to chop down 18 trees at the Grandpont Nature Reserve but got as far as six before officials said any further action would be breaking the law.

Objectors opposed the tree chopping as they said it would be "depriving 1,000 people a day" from the woodland to make space for a "huge" and "unnecessary" bridge.

The council says its new pedestrian and cycle bridge, which was due to be deliberated for planning permission later that month, will "serve as a vital link for local people".

Objector Dan Glazebrook said he was relieved officials had intervened when they had to prevent the illegal felling. He added: "They owe us one. They were aware but were just going ahead with it. They would have been faced with prosecution if they hadn't stopped."

"We are still opposed to the bridge and are urging everyone to write to the planning committee officer. It is a waste of public money."

Mr Glazebrook, who was born and grew up in the area, said the group of objectors had conducted a tally last week which revealed that around 1,000 people walked through the woodland each day.

A forestry commission officer said the six trees already felled had been "just about" within the legal limit but planning permission or a licence was required to fell any further trees.

The council had insisted a few days before that the tree felling itself did not require planning consent.

In response to the recent intervention, a council spokesman said: "Following recent work to remove selected trees in preparation for the proposed construction of the Oxpens River Bridge, the council is applying to the Forestry Commission for a licence for the remainder, in parallel with seeking planning permission for the bridge."

"The council has paused work while this

happens. The Forestry Commission has confirmed the works completed to date did not require a permit as they were below the thresholds, as per advice given to the council by external consultants ahead of work starting."

Deborah Glass Woodin, another bridge and tree felling opponent said: "I am hugely relieved, but it is really disappointing we had to fight to get them to do the right thing. The council had been absolutely insistent that what they were doing was not illegal."

"If they had continued they would have been prosecuted. People stepped up and we were guarding those trees from seven in the morning until seven in the evening. The main thing to say is what brilliant community action it has been."

ELIZABETH HAIGH reported for MailOnline that Nightingales have put a stop to plans to build two multi-million pound housing projects near Kent woodland.

Plans for 21 two to five bedroom homes on the Hoo peninsula, close to Chattenden Woods and the Lodge Hill Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), were first put forward three years ago, but the plans have now been rejected following a petition which received 33,000 signatures and objections raised by wildlife charities such as the RSPB.

Longfield-based Esquire Developments had submitted two applications to Medway Council in November 2020. One proposed nine homes on grassland north of Lodge Hill Lane, Chattenden - about 1km away from the Ratcliffe Highway in Hoo. A second application lodged plans for between 8 and 12 self-build properties directly next to it.

However, both were refused by the local authority in December 2022. Its planning committee felt they would have a "significantly detrimental impact" on neighbouring Chattenden Woods and Lodge Hill.

Following their refusal, Esquire decided to appeal the decisions in November, 11 months after councillors turned them down. Both proposals were dealt with by an inspector from the Planning Inspectorate.

Objections to the plans were raised by the RSPB, Natural England and the Kent Wildlife Trust.



Lodge Hill is listed as among the best sites for nightingales in the UK and one of the last strongholds for the secretive songbird. A protected bird species, nightingales nest close to ground level making them vulnerable to predators.

A statement by the inspector said concerns raised by councillors regarding their protection was key.

In a statement outlining its appeal against the Lodge Hill Lane refusal, the property developers stated: "The scheme is in a suitable and sustainable location and the development represents the reuse of an underused site."

However, upon visiting the sites at Lodge Hill Lane on 13 February, the decision to refuse planning permission on the two plots has now

been upheld.

A statement read: "The Chattenden Woods and Lodge Hill SSSI is partly designated in order to safeguard the nightingale population and the habitat upon which they are reliant. The presence of the appropriate habitat and a current lack of disturbance provide suitable conditions for nightingales."

"However, due to challenges in relation to access, the appellant has not carried out an up to date survey of nightingale numbers and habitats, instead relying on data from a national survey undertaken in 2012 by the British Trust for Ornithology."

"Therefore, although no evidence has been provided to outline the current extent of the nightingale population in the SSSI, from the 2012 data and the suitable conditions identified, it can be reasonably assumed the nightingale population in this location is significant and in close proximity to the appeal site."

"Therefore, for the reasons given above and having had regard to all other matters raised, the proposal would conflict with the development plan taken as a whole and I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed."

A petition, created in November, opposing the estates was set up by all three Independent councillors for the Hoo St Werburgh and High Halstow ward, George Crozer, Michael Pearce and Ron Sands.

In a joint statement they said: "Victory for the Hoo Peninsula's Nightingales". The proposed development would have harmed our nationally important nightingale population on the Hoo Peninsula, and set a precedent for further development that could come forward."

"Thank you to the tens of thousands of people who signed the petition. This outcome is incredibly important and will go a long way in ensuring other important sites such as Deangate Ridge, home to eight nightingale territories, are also protected from development."

"We will always defend our beautiful Hoo Peninsula and the wonderful wildlife which exists here."

Prior to the plans being rejected, Esquire even suggested a "no-cat policy" be created for future occupants in a bid to see the proposal given the green light. It was also on the cards for the site to be secured with cat-proof fencing to reduce the risk of harm to the nightingales.

However, the RSPB deemed cat covenants as "unenforceable". The charity said after the decision: "Chattenden Woods & Lodge Hill Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) is a nationally important site for Nightingales. It was the RSPB's view that if the housing developments went ahead within 400m of the SSSI this would have an adverse effect on the Nightingale population in this area, a species that has suffered dramatic population declines."

"The Hoo Peninsula is an extremely important area for nature and we have always been clear that developments such as this need to be delivered sensitively with a plan in place that ensures the right homes are situated in the right places, while important wildlife sites are protected."

Developers stated the scheme would have "delivered much-needed housing in an area which is not meeting its housing need and has not met its housing need in a generation".

The Hoo Peninsula has been a hotspot for housing debate.

Following the decision to strip £170 million of funding from Medway Council as part of the government's Housing Infrastructure Fund (HIF) in 2022, more than 10,000 homes were planned for the rural district before the decision to reverse the funding was made.

Medway has to provide a total of 28,500 homes by 2040, as part of central government housing targets amid a widespread need for young people to get on the property ladder.

ELEANOR BURLEIGH reported for Bucks Free Press that a drainage company from High Wycombe has been forced to pay over £5,000 after waste linked to its address was found dumped in a woodland area.

Drainiac Ltd, a drain and sewer clearance company based in Hazlemere, was fined £4,000 and ordered to pay over £1,000 towards clean-up and investigation costs after waste from its address was illegally fly-tipped on Gravelly Way in Penn.

High Wycombe Magistrates Court heard on 21 February, that Drainiac Ltd exchanged a pile of mixed building waste for £50 in cash with a man who asked if they had any scrap metal to dispose of back in June 2023.

However, the company had unknowingly done business with a rogue trader who later dumped the waste on Gravelly Way, where it was found by a council enforcement officer and traced back to Drainiac Ltd.

The Hazlemere business pleaded guilty to failing in their duty of care when transferring waste to a waste remover, prompting Thomas Broom, Buckinghamshire Council's Cabinet Member for Climate Change and Environment, to warn others against paying for waste disposal services with cash.

Mr Broom said: "Buckinghamshire Council has a firm position on fly-tipping. It is against the law and offenders will face 'zero tolerance' consequences.

"This offence was traced through evidence found amongst the waste which traced back to a company who had not made the correct checks on the waste remover. Even though the company had not carried out the fly-tipping directly, as the producer of the waste, they are held accountable for its legal disposal.

"We continue to emphasise to everyone; cash payment is not traceable so we would encourage people not to pay by cash when having waste removed.

"Always use a registered waste removal service. You can check easily online and pay by card or even cheque which creates a digital, traceable record and allows our enforcement team to seek to prosecute the offenders directly."

The council increased its threshold for fly-tipping fines in December 2023, raising the maximum Fixed Penalty Notice (FPN) for the offence from £400 to £1,000.

Fixed Penalty Notices are used for smaller-scale offences and payment means avoiding court proceedings and a criminal record.

For larger-scale and more serious fly-tipping incidents, the party involved can be summoned to Magistrates' Court and face custodial sentences and costs totalling thousands of pounds.

JACK TOOTH reported for the Bolton News that a man arranged for more than a dozen protected trees to be cut down or damaged by someone he saw on social media.

Sharjeel Iqbal, from Lostock, paid £2,000 to an individual identified by the council as 'George' back in November 2022.

Around six months later a complaint came in to the council more than a dozen protected trees were cut down or damaged despite no decay or disease, a complaint confirmed after a visit by council officers to Regent Road.

A contravention of a Tree Preservation Order is an offence under the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.

Iqbal, 36, admitted he made no enquiries about the trees and said he was unaware these were protected trees. At Bolton Magistrates' Court on 26 February he was slapped with a fine and court costs to a total of £4,280.

Akhtar Zaman, Bolton Council's cabinet member for regeneration, said: "Felling protected trees without permission is illegal and can cause irreparable harm to wildlife habitats as well as hampering our fight in tackling climate change.

"Such orders are intended to protect specified trees and to prevent, in essence, the removal or damaging of trees unless permission has been obtained from the planning authority."

WRITING for the Evesham Journal, Charlotte Albutt reported that residents have bid a final farewell to a 400-year-old Evesham oak tree.

The tree on Monks Walk, which dates back before the English Civil War when King James I was on the throne, was a well-loved feature among residents. However, the oak tree has been removed after a tree surveyor found the inside of the trunk had begun to rot.

On 9 March, residents gathered around the old tree and attached a yellow ribbon to it as they said their goodbyes.

Stuart Albutt, a resident on Monks Walk, said the tree has always been a nice feature for residents, and it is a shame to see it going.



"It is a real shame, and the tree is in the process of coming down. It is speculated the tree is 400 years old after a tree surgeon did a scan. We have seen one or two photos dating back to the 1800s. It is sad to see a big chunk of English history go because it has become rotten. It has come to a natural end."

The group of residents have plans to preserve the base of the tree to keep the memory of it alive due to its long-standing presence in the town.

Residents have shared ideas of turning parts of it into a sculpture but said they are open to ideas.

I WAS concerned to read an article on www.gazette-news.co.uk by Millie Emmett reporting that nature bosses have vowed that controversial felling of trees at a Colchester nature reserve will protect the site for the future.

Friday Woods nature reserve and army training site in Bounstead Road, Colchester, has been subject to felling. Stacks of trees are piled up on the site, causing some residents to feel angry yet again as they witness the trees being chopped.

The Military of Defence, which manages the site, applied to Natural England for the felling of

the trees. Natural England allowed the felling to take place after a consultation with the Forestry Commission.

The decision was made in order to protect grassland on the site, which is part of the SSSI.

The felling is being funded by the MOD's Conservation Stewardship Fund, which supports conservation projects.

Deputy director of Natural England West Anglia Team, John Torlesse said: "Friday Woods Training Area features a special habitat known as acid grassland, which is particularly important for plants and insects and now rare in Essex.

"At this site, trees and scrub have been encroaching on this rare ecosystem for several decades. In consultation with the Forestry Commission, Natural England has provided consent for the felling of some trees which will help to protect this high-value grassland ecology at the Roman River Site of Special Scientific Interest."

Berechurch Ward councillor, Dave Harris said: "They did apply to Natural England, which was agreed because they're mature trees that have grown bigger than the army wanted them to, but they're cutting down perfectly good healthy trees.

"It's sad to see the trees stacked up and when you see the rings on the trees it's clear they are healthy and have no diseases."

ALEX O'LEARY, Multi-Media Journalist for TeesideLive, reported that chants of "out out out" rang out around a heated parish council meeting after a tree was controversially felled last month.

The tense meeting, which took place at Gleneagles Community Centre and was eventually abandoned, saw residents and councillors come to verbal blows over the removal of a sycamore tree at Marske Playing Field.

The Saltburn, Marske, and New Marske Parish Council decided to remove the tree on 19 September last year, but it wasn't removed until 11 March.

Parish chairman, Cllr Vera Rider, was accused of being a "tin-pot dictator" by one member at the meeting as she came under fire about decisions the parish council made regarding the tree. Cllr Rider did not respond to the claim. The parish council previously agreed to discuss the matter at the next leisure meeting on 19 March, but said it presented an "imminent danger" and tore it down.

Protestors came together at the tree on 28 February after hearing it was due to be felled that day. The protest left the tree's future hanging in the balance, but it only delayed the felling by a matter of days.

Complaints had been made of the tree overhanging a nearby property for several years, with an arborist reportedly ruling it had a "weak stem". Residents raised concerns earlier this year - with parish council clerk Jo Manning previously saying that a member of the public applied, but was refused, a TPO.

Resident Susan Lorrimer, 59, spoke at the meeting, claiming protestors phoned Cllr Rider on 28 February who "would give no information apart from the fact that the tree was coming down, even if she had to do it herself."

Another public member argued that Cllr Rider had shown a "total disregard for the principle of leadership amongst others." He said: "Holders of public office are required to actively promote and robustly support the principles and to challenge poor behaviour wherever it occurs.

"With that in mind, and given her own actions, as pointed out by the previous speaker,

she should be challenging herself as to whether she should be holding a position of public office and then she should remove herself from that public office." In response, several members shouted "here" and applause rang out.

St Germain's Ward Cllr Peter Finlinson said an agreement was made with the parish council in January to examine the decision made in September to fell the tree. He claims this was then "undermined not once but twice by decisions made certainly without my knowledge and without other members' knowledge."

He concluded with a vote of no confidence against Cllr Rider, where 50 people were counted as putting their hands up and 5 voted against the vote shortly after.

One person asked what Cllr Rider, who was re-elected as an independent Redcar and Cleveland councillor in May before rejoining the Conservative Party in November, was going to do. "That's 50 people, members of the public. You are supposed to represent. That's 50, people what are you going to do about that," they said.

Cllr Rider asked if they could carry on the meeting, saying it was "not open for questions." One public member responded by saying: "No absolutely not. You are going to have to throw us all out."

Someone later asked: "How do we remove you?" Cllr Rider responded: "You have got no authority to move me at all." In response, someone argued: "Well you have got no authority to move a tree but you did."

Cllr Rider then said she would not be entering into any discussion and that the meeting would continue "whether you are here or not" before reminding Cllr Finlinson about his conduct for a second time, prompting laughter. Four hands were counted after a vote to exclude him from the meeting.

Cllr Finlinson refused and Cllr Rider then decided to abandon the meeting. "Is that because you are not winning your way?" someone asked. Rounds of clapping and chants of "out out out" then ensued around the building.

Saltburn, Marske and New Marske Parish Council statement in full.

"A member of the public raised concerns regarding sycamore/cherry trees overhanging a property in Marske in June 2023, the resident had raised concerns over the trees for several years. An Arborist was asked to take a look at the problem, he reported that the sycamore tree had a weak stem and that the cherry trees were invasive.

"The option to remove/prune the trees was discussed at the Leisure meeting on 19 September 2023, and following the advice given from the tree surgeon the council decided the best option would be to remove the trees.

"We have received opposition to this decision from members of the public, it was decided to discuss the problem again at the Leisure meeting on 19 March 2024, members of the public were informed they could attend the meeting to discuss their concerns. A member of the public approached the Borough Council to put in place a tree protection order, this was not granted and therefore given the imminent danger presented by the sycamore tree, it was felt the tree needed to be felled as a matter of urgency.

"The weak stem could result in the tree falling and causing damage to property or injury to person. The Parish Council has a duty of care and would be negligent if they failed to act. The company commissioned to do the work will carry out all necessary risk assessments and ensure all wildlife obligations are fulfilled.

"Therefore we have instructed the arborist

to remove the sycamore tree as a matter of urgency, we have asked for the cherry trees to be left in place at the present time unless he needs to remove/thin some of the trees for access. We take our responsibilities seriously and as a matter of course plant new trees every year where we can find suitable sites."

Editor's comment – I think Broadland is a lovely place to live!!!

RICHARD TORNE, reported for the Kingsbridge and Salcombe Gazette that South Hams District Council (SHDC) has successfully prosecuted a resident who illegally cut down two protected trees in a woodland near Hope Cove more than two years ago.

The incident happened in December 2022 when the individual, who was not named, contracted an independent gardening service that was reportedly unaware of the trees' protected status and cut them down. However, they were in fact in breach of a Woodland TPO.

SHDC investigates unauthorised work to protected trees and, where appropriate, will prosecute individuals or companies that deliberately damage or destroy a protected tree, often for personal or financial gain.

In this instance, the defendant received a £10,000 fine and was ordered to pay costs totalling more than £5,000. In addition, the offender will also be required to replace the trees which will be protected by the same Tree Preservation Order once planted.

Cllr Dan Thomas, South Hams District Council's Executive Member for Planning, said: "I am very pleased with the outcome of this case and more importantly with the clear message it sends. We never want to take our residents to court, but when planning law is deliberately ignored, we can and we will."

According to the government, illegal tree felling can cause irreparable harm to forests, as well as damage wildlife habitats and negatively impact local communities.

WEST Lindsey District Council successfully prosecuted two men for the felling of six trees that were covered by TPOs at a property on Main Drive in Sudbrooke, in June last year.

The Council took action against Mr Bruce Haughton and Glen Barrett of Barrett Treecare, who both entered guilty pleas at Boston Magistrates Court on 11 March.

The Council were made aware that the offences had occurred and attended the site to investigate. Officers recognised that a number of trees had been felled or crowned that were covered by TPOs, without seeking consent from the Council.



TPOs form part of the land searches that property owners undertake when purchasing any property and these particular trees formed part of a larger woodland area within Sudbrooke, within which all the trees are protected.

Haughton, who was deemed to have been reckless in his actions, was fined £3,844 with a victim surcharge of £1,538 and costs of

£994.70, making a total payable of £6,376.70.

Barrett, who was deemed to have been neglectful, was fined £1,600 with a victim surcharge of £640 and costs of £994.70 making a total payable of £3,234.70.

Chair of the Council's Planning Committee at West Lindsey District Council, Cllr Matt Boles said "We are very pleased with the outcome of this case. I commend the members of the public who made the Council aware of this issue and in turn our officers for following it through to this successful outcome.

"Tree Preservation Orders are there for a reason and this outcome should serve as a warning to any landowner or businesses wishing to fell trees, to think twice, and check with the Council before doing so."

The Council will be seeking to confirm the replanting of the trees to ensure that what was originally removed will be present again in the future.

Andy Gray, Housing and Environmental Enforcement Manager at the Council added "We hope that this demonstrates to the public that the Council takes wilful damage to our protected environment extremely seriously.

"Any person living on or owning land that contains trees needs to ensure that they have taken steps to understand whether they are protected or not and then where they are aware they are protected, should not commence any works on them until they have obtained the necessary consent. If anybody is in any doubt, they should contact the Council in advance."

ANNE SUSLAK reported for the Saffron Walden Reporter that a petition to save a 500-year-old oak tree on the outskirts of Clavering from development has reached more than 1,300 signatures.

Developer Pelham Structures applied to fell the tree in February as part of a plan to build five houses on the east side of Clatterbury Lane. The tree made headlines in September when a school bus collided with it and had its roof ripped off by the branches, with several children taken to hospital.



Residents are now campaigning to save the tree, which historically marked the boundary between Clavering and Arkesden.

Campaigner Jilly McNaughton said: "The response to the planning consultation and petition has been huge so far and shows the strength of feeling about protecting this landmark tree.

"It also shows that the majority of people want to protect nature and prevent biodiversity loss. We simply can't look away and let a small minority with vested interests take what isn't theirs to take."

The petition also calls on Essex Highways to take 'urgent action' to make the road safer following the bus crash.

Jilly said: "I can't understand why Essex Highways has not acted, despite Essex County Council's Tree Team advising them the tree

should be retained and a kerb installed as a priority to prevent future collisions.

"The double decker bus still travels up and down this road twice a day. The tree is healthy and not dangerous but the road needs to be made safer here to protect people and this amazing heritage oak - especially if double decker buses are to continue being used on our narrow country lanes."

WRITING for BBC News, Tara Vallente and Pamela Tickell reported that plans to cut down trees on a Cumbrian street over safety concerns have been "paused" amid objections by residents.

Westmorland and Furness Council said some of the trees at Barrow's Infields Park had caused flagstones to rise, posing a risk to pedestrians.

Residents were left "upset" and "disgusted" over the proposals, saying the area would not look the same while also raising worries over loss of habitat for wildlife.

The council now says it will organise a public meeting to discuss the issues with temporary signage to be put in place to warn of the potential danger to people on foot.

Residents received a letter from the local authority on 6 March informing them of the proposed felling, according to the Local Democracy Reporting Service.

Joanne Fitzsimmons is among those to have expressed shock, saying people had been given "13 days' notice that every tree on the cul de sac was going to be chopped down".

She added she had felt "devastation" because it is a leafy street and that's what attracts you to it in the first place when you buy the house. The trees, apart from the little one, are as old as the houses, which I think were built in 1904 so 120-year-old trees that are established and mature.

"It's so sad because I like history as well. The houses are Victorian and in keeping with that time the trees match the houses and it won't look the same without the trees."

The council had said the footway and kerbs had "lifted in various places due to root heave from the trees" and that any effort to carry out repairs would "require excavation of the footway surface". The trees would be replaced, it explained.

However, a spokesperson has now said: "Following concerns raised by the public, we acknowledge this has caused upset and as a result the planned works are being paused. "We appreciate the value that trees hold both for our environment and our communities, and recognise more discussion needs to take place with consideration of all the available options."

MILES DAVIS reported for BBC News that a case to consider whether the felling of more than 100 trees in Plymouth was unlawful has been dismissed.

The council's former Conservative leader Richard Bingley signed an urgent procedure order for trees in Armada Way to be cut down in March 2023.

Ali White, from from Save the Trees of Armada Way, brought the judicial review against Plymouth City Council. At the Royal Courts of Justice, Judge David Elvin KC said he did not consider the circumstances to be exceptional. He dismissed the case on 20 March.

Plymouth City Council told the court it had withdrawn the decision in May 2023 and had done everything it could to save remaining trees.

The council said the new leader Tudor



Evans also accepted a full council decision in July to commission an independent review which was still planned to go ahead. It also agreed to give an undertaking to the court regarding the terms of the review.

The council said it was "hard to see how it could have done more".

The High Court previously rejected Plymouth City Council's application to have the judicial review thrown out.

In February the council approved new plans to regenerate Armada Way involving planting more than 200 trees and building a new play village at a cost of about £37m.

MARY STENSON reported for DevonLive that locals say they are "devastated" after a large number of trees were cut down along a popular Exeter walking route. The felling was carried out by the University of Exeter who say it was necessary due for safety reasons.

Photos show a huge pile of felled poplar trees along the footpath that runs adjacent to the University of Exeter's Duckes Meadow playing fields. While the university says that signs were put up in the area to notify people that they would be cutting down trees, some locals say it has come without warning.

One person wrote on X, formerly Twitter: "The footpath from Mill Lane to Salmon Pool back of Duckes Marsh is closed today. Tree felling. Shame a lovely line of poplar trees."

Another replied, saying: "It was quite a shocking sight yesterday - would be really good to hear why this was necessary."

On Wednesday evening, Rachel Russell, who lives nearby, told DevonLive: "I came home tonight to find around 20 poplar trees decimated on the footpath alongside the Exeter Uni playing fields that run between Duckes Meadow and Exeter Crematorium gardens."

She says that those who regularly use the footpath are "devastated, angry and upset" and that the site looked "like a hurricane's been through". The University of Exeter has promised a program of replanting, which will include English oak and cherry.

"Dog walkers, neighbours, everyone is devastated, angry and upset. This was a stunning tree line and wildlife corridor. No warning, no consultation, no explanation. A rookery, mistletoe, birds nests, valuable moths, bat haunts etc all gone in one day. Looks like a hurricane's been through."

"This was a full stand of beautiful poplars two days ago. I moved here for these trees. I hope there's a robust and prompt replanting plan at the very least."

A spokesperson for the University of Exeter said: "Following a recent scheduled inspection by an independent arboriculture consultant, some poplar trees near the Duckes Meadow sports facilities were identified as posing potential safety concerns."

"After consultation with the local authority and the Forestry Commission, work was carried out this week. Signs were placed within the local area to inform residents of the work before it commenced."

"A range of new trees, including English oak and cherry, will be replanted to replace those felled, to provide an enriched habitat for wildlife and environmental benefits in the area."

PLANS to allow mobile cafes in New Forest car parks have been branded a "recipe for disaster" for its free-roaming animals.

The scheme, which will see Forestry England extend the remit of ice cream vans to include the sale of hot drinks and snacks, is set to be rolled out this spring at Boldrewood, Blackwater, Wilverley, Dibden and Bolton's Bench in Lyndhurst.

It comes in the wake of FE rejecting calls from local traders to ban the Bolton's Bench ice cream van over concerns it was stealing their custom.

The mobile cafe plans have been similarly condemned, with representatives from the Commons Defence Association, the New Forest Young Commons and the Friends of the New Forest calling for a rethink.

Speaking at a meeting of the Verderers Court on Wednesday, Commons Defence Association chair Andrew Parry-Norton urged the verderers to take the "unusual" step of blocking Forestry England's plans.

"Commoners' stock interacting with visitors is already a major concern. Adding families' queueing then eating cakes and sandwiches will draw ponies into conflict with visitors," warned Mr Parry-Norton.

"Pigs during pannage season are quick to learn to use a new food source, which can have serious disease consequences."

As reported, Forestry England's Deputy Surveyor for the New Forest, Craig Harrison, said the organisation is increasing reliant on revenue generated from mobile catering van licences to fund carpark repairs and its conservation work.

He said: "In addition to our forestry and habitat restoration work in the New Forest, we also look after a network of 130 car parks, maintain hundreds of miles of trails, paths and cycle routes and run visitor-focused ranger patrols."

Setting out that the new mobile catering units will be located in the Forest's more "robust locations" that already supported high numbers of visitors, Mr Harrison explained: "The key update at these locations is the provisions of hot drinks and a limited number of unwrapped cakes and pastries."

He said there were "no plans" for burger vans or allowing the sale of hot or cold sandwiches, adding: "We agree that would be inappropriate."

The new licence holder at Bolton's Bench in Lyndhurst, Silvie Brejchova, also addressed the Verderers Court in a bid to alleviate concerns, stating that cakes would be homemade with "very little packaging" and she would become an "ambassador" for the Forest. Ms Brejchova said: "I am delighted to have run my mobile cafe business for three years now. We are not just a cafe, we take pride in making a difference to the community and the environment around us."

However, Louise England, chair of the New Forest Young Commons, said members had "serious concerns" over the proposal. "We are concerned that the proposal in the longer term will introduce an element of urbanisation, changing the natural environment forever, mimicking what is available at many less unique places. Once introduced, it would be impossible to turn back the clock and recover what is lost."

Friends of the New Forest vice-chair Peter Frost also spoke against the plans: "Surely such

outlets in these proposed New Forest locations can only increase adverse interactions between visitors and commoners' stock, attract vermin and foxes, and raise the spectre of increased competition for hard-pressed local traders."

Fellow New Forest Association member and New Forest Consultative Panel chair Brian Tarnoff warned "inappropriate" New Forest activities had been normalised by the continued operation of campsites on Crown lands.

He said: "Forestry England has pledged to

manage the Crown lands as a national nature reserve. With this in mind it is hard to fathom how honeypot food van pitches or campsites could ever be established here."

Stating that the Commons Defence Association had "every sympathy" with Forestry England's financial worries, Mr Parry-Norton said "quick monetary gains" must not come at the expense of the national park's special environment.

"We ask the verderers, as protectors of

commoning, to think very carefully before giving their permission," said Mr Parry-Norton.

"This is an unusual request and, as such, is not covered by the memorandum of understanding between FE and the Verderers. The Forest needs to be correctly funded, and that responsibility lies with Defra and the government, let's not create problems for each other by trying to achieve very quick, small monetary gains."



Tree Preservation Orders and Conservation Area News

Broadland Tree Preservation Orders Served, Confirmed and Revoked

TPO No	Address	Served	Trees Protected	Status
2022 No 13	Land rear 9 St Paul's Close, Hellesdon	13/12/2022	T1 magnolia	Confirmed
2023 No BD0622	Highway verge south of White Woman Lane, Sprowston	13/09/2023	T1, T2 & T3 hornbeam	Confirmed
2023 No BD0630	Land east of Sears Close, Aylsham	01/11/2023	T1 oak	Provisional
2023 No BD0632	Land on south-east side of Cawston Road, Reepham	09/11/2011	T1 oak	Provisional
2023 No BD0634	Land within church grounds south-east of St Margarets Church, Drayton .	14/11/2023	T1 lime	Provisional
2023 No BD0635	Land south of Muck Lane, Rackheath	21/11/2023	T1, T2, T3, T4, T5, Y6, T7, T8, T9 and T10 oak	Provisional
2024 No BD0645	Marriotts Way south of De Ja Vu, 12 Reepham Road, Cawston	26/01/2024	T1 oak	Provisional
2024 No BD0647	Land south of 28 Station Road, Salhouse	08/02/2024	T1 & T2 oak	Provisional
2024 No BD0648	Land north of Ringland Lane, Ringland	02/02/2024	T1 hornbeam	Provisional
2024 No BD0649	Land at Blofield Hall, Hall Road, Blofield	11/03/2024	T1, T3, T4, T7 & T9 oak, T2 monkey puzzle, T5 Persian ironwood, T6 Eucalyptus, T8 silver birch, T10 sycamore, G1 2 x oak, G2 2 x oak & 2 x sycamore and G3 1 x magnolia, 1 x multi-stemmed cypress, 3 x Yew, 4 x Acer, 1 x western red cedar (maiden) & 1 x western red cedar (multi-stemmed)	Provisional
2024 No BD0650	Rear garden of 13 Bernard Close, Rackheath	07/03/2024	T1 ash & T2 oak	Provisional

Current Works to Trees Subject to a Tree Preservation Order and Section 211 Notifications for Works to Trees Within Conservation Areas

App No	Address	Cat	Species / Requested Works	Decision
2024/0184 (amended)	Swallow House, Buckenham Road, Lingwood	TPO	T1 lime - reduce E, N & S aspects by 2m (all aspects currently 7m) and height by 2.5m (currently 15m) to reduce pressures on compromised stem/bark inclusion. Remove major deadwood and sever Ivy at base. T2 sycamore - notable decay at the base of tree; reduce extremities on N aspect by 1.5m (currently 6m) and height by 2.5m (currently 13m) to reduce loading on compromised stem. T3 lime - reduce W, N & S, aspects by 2m (all aspects currently 7m) and height by 2.5m (currently 15m) to reduce pressures on compromised stem/bark inclusion. Remove major deadwood and sever Ivy at base. T4 lime - reduce lateral branches by 1.5-2m (all aspects currently 8m) to remove conflict with building and overhead utilities and to reduce loading on v-shaped bifurcation at around 3m.	Approved
2024/0371	Little Plumstead Hospital, Hospital Road, Little Plumstead	TPO	T1 oak - reduce low lateral limb overhanging outdoor gym by 8m to approx 8m and reduce upper lateral limbs overhanging outdoor gym equipment by 5m to approx 8m. T2 oak - reduce low lateral limbs overhanging the outdoor gym equipment by 3-4m to approx 6m.	16/02/2024

2024/0382	63 Greenborough Road, Sprowston	TPO	T1 beech - Crown clean. Remove one lower branch due to poor form and weak union at collar. Reduce lowest lateral branches by 2-3m on the west side of crown. Approx crown spread will be 8/9m to 6/7m on the western side.	Approved
2024/0384	6 South Avenue, Thorpe St Andrew	211	T1 & T2 sycamore - fell.	Withdrawn
2024/0406	St Fabian and St Sebastians Church, Horning Road, Woodbastwick	211	7 self-sown yews within churchyard – reduce height from 7.32m to 4.88m. Work to be carried out over 7 years reducing one tree per year. Lift growth of trees around bases 2m. Remove ivy.	No objection
2024/0412	39 Bircham Road, Reepham	TPO	T1 blue cedar - 12m high with 11.4m spread. Reduce height and spread by approx 1.2m. to approx 10.8m tall with 10.2m spread.	Approved
2024/0442	1 - 15 Earnshaw Court, Thorpe St Andrew	211	Fell and replace 3 trees.	No objection
2024/0446	15 Drabblegate, Aylsham	211	T1 Norway spruce – fell.	No objection
2024/0447	92A Taverham Road, Taverham	TPO	T1 and T2 sycamore - fell.	Approved
2024/0462	1 St Andrews Court, Yarmouth Road, Thorpe St Andrew	211	Reduce height from 14.5m to 12.5m, north radius from 5.5m to 4.5m, south radius from 4.5m to 3.5m, west radius from 5m to 3.5m and east radius from 6m to 4m. Crown clearance from 1.8m to 3m.	No objection
2024/0465	Catton Court, Old Catton	TPO	T22 yew - trim back re-growth on stem and over garden. T23 yew - trim back re-growth on stem and over garden and neighbouring drive. T32 magnolia - reduce from 9.5m to 8m, crown spread from 4m to 3m. T38 yew - trim back crown spread by 0.5m. T44 holly - pollard 6m from ground. T10 yew - tip reduce branches to clear street light and tip reduce extended branch above streetlight. T18 beech - raise low secondary branches to 4.5m. T20 bay - re-coppice to allow more light into adjacent building. Trim into a compact bush when re-grown. T25 sycamore - tip reduce branches over neighbouring drive by approx 1.5m (from 5.5m radius to 4m) to reduce “honey dew” residue in spring. T25 silver birch - raise low secondary branches to 5m. Reduce branches back from building to give 2m clearance. T30 common lime - remove re-grown stem and basal shoots, raise low branches over telephone wires. Remove any re-formed deadwood. Tip reduce extended branch to south over neighbouring garden back to the canopy profile. T34 honey locust - clean crown of deadwood and suppressed growth. Tip reduce extended side branches in lower crown back to alternative growth points to give a crown radius of 6m. Raise low branches to give a 4m ground clearance over amenity green space. T36 common oak - remove re-formed deadwood. Raise low secondary branches to give ground clearance of 5m. Reduce branches restricting light from streetlight. Selectively tip reduce extended branches in lower crown back to alternative growth points leaving a crown radius of 6.5m (currently 7m to 8m). T39 honey locust - clean crown of deadwood and suppressed growth. Tip reduce extended side branches in lower crown to the south back to alternative growth points to give crown radius of 5.5m (now 7m). Raise low branches to give 5m clearance over amenity green space. T40 magnolia - reduce height from 12m to 10m. Reduce crown spread from 5.5m to 4m. Shape into dome.	Approved
2024/0466	Halvergate Hall, The Street, Halvergate	211	T2 & T3 oak - reduce overall height from 19m to 16m. Crown clean.	No objection
2024/0468	Lion House, 5 Unicorn Yard, Aylsham	211	S1 sycamore - pollard to previous height including removal of limbs overhanging adjacent barn. W1 willow – reduce height from approx 5m to 3.5m. B1, B2, B3, B4, B5, B6 silver birch & C1 conifer - reduce height from approx 7m to 5m.	No objection
2024/0473	Catton Hall, Parkside Drive, Old Catton	211	T1 holly - crown lift to approx 4.5m. T2 & T3 holly - crown lift both remaining healthy branches to approx 4.5m. T4 oak - fell.	No objection
2024/0477	Park Office, Haveringland Hall Park, Haveringland	TPO	T1 English oak - reduce southern radial crown spread from 5m to 3m to suitable branch unions. T2 wild cherry, T4, T5 & T12 ash (tag 264), T10 Scots pine & T15 English oak - fell. T3 Norway maple - remove hazard beam below crack to suitable union. T6 ash (tag 251) – reduce eastern crown spread from 5m to 3m to suitable unions. T7 & T8 ash - clean out crown removing dead and damaged wood. T9 English oak - reduce southern radial spread from 6m to 4m to suitable unions. T11 English oak - deadwood. T13 & T14 common ash - remove entire crown to leave 4m stump.	Split decision
2024/0484	Larch Grove, 14 Charles Close, Wroxham	211	T1 Monterey pine - crown lift to approx 4m.	No objection
2024/0489	3 Lakeside, Haveringland Hall Park, Haveringland	TPO	T1 goat willow – fell.	Split decision
2024/0491	5 Lakeside, Haveringland Hall Park, Haveringland	TPO	T1 goat willow – fell.	Split decision

2024/0492	46 Leveson Road, Sprowston	TPO	T1 oak - crown lift to approx 5-6m. Crown clean reviewing deadwood and crossing branches to canopy by no more than 10% and remove epicormic growth from stem.	Approved
2024/0501	12 The Avenue, Wroxham	211	T38 beech -remove 4 lower branches. T39 oak - remove decayed trunk. G4 Douglas fir - remove 20m from height to top of hedge of approx 5m. T34 beech - remove 10m from height to top of hedge of approx 1.5m.	01/03/2024
2024/0503	Verge at junction of Drayton Grove and Fakenham Road, Drayton	TPO	T1 Monterey cypress - crown reduction by reducing height from 26m to 21-22m and spread from 28m to 23-24m to suitable pruning points. Clean out deadwood, remove rubbing, crossing, or split branches. Reduce branches from building as part of crown reduction. Reduce large, low limb by 3-4m to reduce end weight. Raise crown by 5m all round.	Approved
2024/0511	Mill Hill, 11 Green Lane, Horstead With Stanninghall	211	T1 beech - reduce height from 13m to 10m and canopy width from 10m to 8m. T2 silver birch - reduce height from 7m to 5m and canopy width from 5m to 3m. T3 beech - remove large extended NW facing limb back to main stem. Reduce remaining height from 13m to 10m and canopy width from 10m to 8m. T4 holly - fell. T5 ash - remove large extended limb heading toward property.	No objection
2024/0526	Cramond Lodge, 6 Hartwell Road, Wroxham	211	T1 beech - crown reduce by approx 1.5m from 20m in height to 18.5m and 17m in width to 15.5m. Thin crown to allow light and air flow through. Crown lift to 2m.	No objection
2024/0529	4 Potters Meadow, Salhouse	TPO	T1 & T2 pine and T3 poplar - fell.	No objection
2024/0536	Frances Cottage, 88 Lower Street, Salhouse	211	T1 fig – remove extended limb over building at 1.5m height 6m width 8m and reduce remaining crown to reform shape and structure by approx 1 to 2m from extended limbs.	No objection
2024/0537	Pump House, Norwich Road, Horstead with Staninghall	211	T1 oak - reduce all branches overhanging site and pump house, back to main trunk of most suitable pruning point beyond boundary.	No objection
2024/0575	Orchard End Palmers Lane, Aylsham	211	T1 yew - remove 2 branches overhanging lane to leave 6m clearance and remove growth around trunk to leave width of 2.7m. T2 hazel - remove 3 splaying branches to leave height clearance of 6m and width clearance of 3m to customers other than between the hours of 08:00 and 18:00 Monday to Saturday. Premises shall not be open to customers on Sunday, bank holidays or public holidays.	No objection
2024/0613	10 Catton Court, Old Catton	TPO	T1 & T2 yew - remove low secondary branches over garden to 3m and raise low branches over public footpath to 2.5m. T3 yew - fell and grind out stump to approx 30cm below ground level.	26/02/2023
2024/0621	Land north west of Bishops Close, Thorpe St Andrew	TPO	T525, T552 Scots Pine, T692 & T557 Scots pine, T722 silver birch and oak – fell. T750 sycamore - remove stem. Sycamore - remove lowest 3 branches.	26/02/2024
2024/0641	Holmside, 2 Wallers Lane, Foulsham	211	Reduce all holly trees from 8m to 2m high.	No objection
2024/0664	West Wending, 1 Lawn Crescent, Thorpe End	211	T1 sycamore - fell.	No objection
2024/0672	Halvergate House, Squires Road, Halvergate	211	T1 plum - fell.	No objection
2024/0673	309 Wroxham Road, Sprowston	TPO	T1 oak - crown reduction reducing height from 13m to 10m eastern aspect from 8m to 5m and western aspect from 7m to 5m. Remove deadwood and retrenched back to live points.	Approved
2024/0682	Blickling Hall, Blickling Road, Blickling	211	T0107 lime - reduce crown by 0.5 to 2m to reduce wind load. T0109 lime - crown to be subject to selective light reduction. T0113 lime - selectively reduce / thin upper crown on all 3 stems by up to 3m. T0124 oak - reduce 2 x vertical leader by up to 5m. T390 oak - fell.	No objection
2024/0698	Three Gables, Rawlinsons Lane, Aylsham	211	T1 sycamore – 15m ht, 1m dia, canopy width 12m. Reduce height by 4m and canopy width by 3m,	No objection
2024/0723	53 Mousehold Lane, Sprowston	TPO	T1 oak - crown reduction of 1.5-2.0m from 16 to 14m, crown lift of parking area to 4.5m and crown clean.	Approved
2024/0734	74 Saint Laurence Avenue, Brundall	TPO	Norway maple - raise crown to 5m above carriageway.	07/03/2024
2024/0745	7 Lodge Place, Thorpe St Andrew	TPO	T1 grand fir - clean out inner crown of deadwood, broken branch stubs and small crossing and broken branches.	08/03/2024
2024/0746	7 Lodge Place, Thorpe St Andrew	211	G2 3 x yew - reduce all three trees by 3.5m to leave height of 5.5m. Current height 9m. Trim side canopied to NW by 0.5m back to garden boundary leaving rown spread to NW of 1.2m.	08/03/2024
2024/0761	19 Stony Lane, Reepham	TPO	T1Scots pine – fell.	11/03/2024
2024/0765	33 Neville Road, Sprowston	TPO	T1 oak - crown reduction by reducing height from 13m to 11.5m and southern aspect only from 16m to 12.5m.	11/03/2024

2024/0792	15 Tracey Road, Thorpe St Andrew	TPO	T031 Scots pine - fell dead tree leaning towards footpath.	13/03/2024
2024/0793	Applewood House, Salhouse Road, Sprowston	TPO	Scots pine <i>Pinus sylvestris</i> – fell under an exception of the TPO restrictions for dead trees.	Exempt tree works
2024/0799	The Ramblers, 22 Cromer Road, Aylsham	211	T1 silver birch - fell. T2 bay tree - reduce from approx 20m to 17m. T3 bay tree - reduce from approx 16m to 15m.	18/03/2024
2024/0810	The Old Rectory, 103 Yarmouth Road, Thorpe St Andrew	211	T1, T2 & T3 Leylandii & T22 holly - fell and grind stumps. T4, T5, T6, T7, T8, T9, T10, T11, T12, T13, T14, T15 & T16 - fell. T17 beech - reduce height from 13 to 10m and spread from 9 to 6m. T18 larch - dead. Fell. T19 & T21 Leylandii - reduce height from approx 12m to 4.5m. T20 Leylandii hedge - reduce height from approx 9m to 4.5m.	24/03/2024
2024/0831	Acorn House, 7A Station New Road, Brundall	TPO	T1 & T2 oak - crown raise to 6m over driveway and crown clean. T3 oak - crown raise to 6m due to bonfire damage and crown clean.	18/03/2024
2024/0832	Calthorpe House, 40 Old Road, Acle	TPO	T3 copper beech – remove 2 larger bottom branches (15-20m) and tip reduce between 2m and 6m to balance tree.	18/03/2024
2024/0861	Golf Club, The Weston Estate, Weston Hall Road, Weston Longville	TPO	T1 Acacia - remove major deadwood and reduce remaining live growth by approx 4-5m.	15/03/2024
2024/0865	3 Banningham Road, Aylsham	211	T1 apple – fell.	19/03/2024
2024/0894	Brookfield House, 26 Brook Street, Buxton	TPO	T1 cherry & T2 sycamore – fell.	20/03/2024
2024/0915	Golf Club, The Weston Estate, Weston Hall Road, Weston Longville	TPO	Oak x 9, cherry x 2, sweet chestnut, sycamore, Scots pine, ash and conifer - fell under exception of TPO restrictions for dead trees.	Exempt tree works
2024/0916	Saxon Haus, 16A Harvey Lane, Thorpe St Andrew	211	T1 ash – fell under an exception of Conservation Area restrictions for dead trees.	25/03/2024

Explanatory Notes:

- 1) App No is the unique Broadland District Council Planning Application number allocated to the application to carry out work and is the number by which progress of the application may be traced. Any comment, objection, support or request for information should quote this number.
- 2) Address is the address to which the application for work relates. That is the address where the trees for which the application is made are located.
- 3) Cat (ie Category) denotes the type of application. TPO = works to trees subject to a Tree Preservation Order; or 211 = Section 211 Notifications for Works to Trees Within Conservation Areas
- 4) Species / Requested Works is the species of the tree(s) concerned and details of the work proposed. A reference such as T1, T2 or G1 may also appear and that is simply a reference to the tree(s) on the TPO, Conservation Order or simply on the application.
- 5) Decision is either the actual decision or the date on which the application was validated by Broadland District Council.
- 6) This list is not intended to be a definitive list of all the relevant details. The reader should always refer to the specific application on the South Norfolk and Broadland District Council Planning website at <https://www.southnorfolkandbroadland.gov.uk/planning-applications/find-planning-application> to view the application or read the Council's decision.

Major Award for The Tree Council and Network Rail's "Partnership Made in Heaven"

THE Tree Council's five-year partnership with Network Rail scooped the Sustainability and Environmental Excellence Award at the prestigious 2024 Rail Business Awards. Judges described it as "a partnership made in heaven" as they congratulated The Tree Council CEO Sara Lom and Jo Lewington, Network Rail Chief Environment & Sustainability Officer, at the packed event hosted at the Manchester Hilton.

Sara Lom said: "Marking five years of brilliant partnership, Network Rail and The Tree Council beat off hot competition to win this prestigious award."

"With 20,000 miles of track, the railway is Britain's longest wildlife corridor and we're delighted that this partnership, which has already planted nearly 300,000 trees with 108 communities, has been recognised in this way ... and there's so much more to come!"

Announcing the winner, the Rail Business Awards said: "The judges felt this collaboration could be a partnership made in heaven."

"Network Rail has a large portfolio of land that is often difficult to access, while The Tree Council has the knowhow and skills to help turn this land into environmental assets. Better

vegetation management should also help to improve the safety of railway operations."

Over the five years working together, The Tree Council has helped Network Rail respond to the recommendations of the Varley Review, whilst also operating as a critical friend, offering regular challenge and encouragement around vegetation and biodiversity management.

In line with the Varley Review, the partnership has helped Network Rail manage its lineside estate as a valuable asset; improved communications, particularly with nearby communities; and supported tree-related training for Network Rail employees, contractors and local community volunteers.

Jo Lewington, Network Rail Chief Environment & Sustainability Officer, said: "We are delighted to be working in partnership with The Tree Council, who are integral to supporting

us with our mission to run the railway safely and efficiently whilst valuing and protecting nature."

"Collaboration with third parties shows just what is possible when we work together and we have learned and matured through our connection with The Tree Council. We are looking forward to building on this work into the future."

Find out more about The Tree Council's partnership with Network Rail by visiting <https://treecouncil.org.uk/partnerships/delivery-partners/network-rail/>. You can see the full list of 2024 Rail Business Awards winners at <https://railbusinessawards.com/2024/en/page/home>

Broadsheet congratulates the Tree Council on the award and a most valuable partnership.

River maintenance and flood prevention - April 2024 to March 2025

River Wensum, River Tud, River Whitewater and Lower Wendling Beck - Spring 2024

What We Do

The Environment Agency inspect and maintain rivers and flood defences. We target this work to reduce the risk of flooding to people and property.

Landowners are responsible for maintaining rivers. You can find more information on rights and responsibilities by visiting:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/owning-a-watercourse>

Our maintenance work keeps rivers and flood defences working together to prevent flooding. Regular maintenance helps our flood defences last longer, which saves money.

You will see us clearing blockages in rivers, cutting grass on flood embankments, and keeping our structures tidy and in good working order.

You can find out what maintenance we are doing and when we plan to do it by visiting:

<https://environment.data.gov.uk/asset-management/index.html>

Maintenance In Your Area

You can see on the map where we are working on the rivers near you. We have planned the following maintenance:

Targeted Channel Maintenance

We prevent blockages and flooding by removing carefully selected branches and debris. We try to leave as much as we can, as it is good habitat.

We usually use hand tools to do this and work from a boat.

Weed Cutting

River weed is cut in specific locations to help water flow. This can help prevent flooding.

We cut weed in a meandering pattern that follows the natural path of the river. This creates a clear way for water to flow and leaves habitat.

Machines working from the bank are used for this work.

Tree Works

Sometimes we need to remove part or all of a tree when it leans into a river or falls over completely. This is because they can slow water flow causing flooding upstream or debris can cause blockages downstream.

Trees provide excellent habitat by creating shade and fish and eels use branches and roots in the water for habitat and breeding. We remove as little of the tree as possible whilst making sure we are still preventing flooding.



We carefully remove weed from rivers to prevent flooding and avoid disturbing wildlife.

Contact Us

Feel free to contact us if you have comments or questions about our work or would like one of our officers to share our work with your community group.

Norfolk Asset Performance Team

Environment Agency, Dragonfly House, 2 Gilders Way, Norwich, Norfolk NR3 1UB

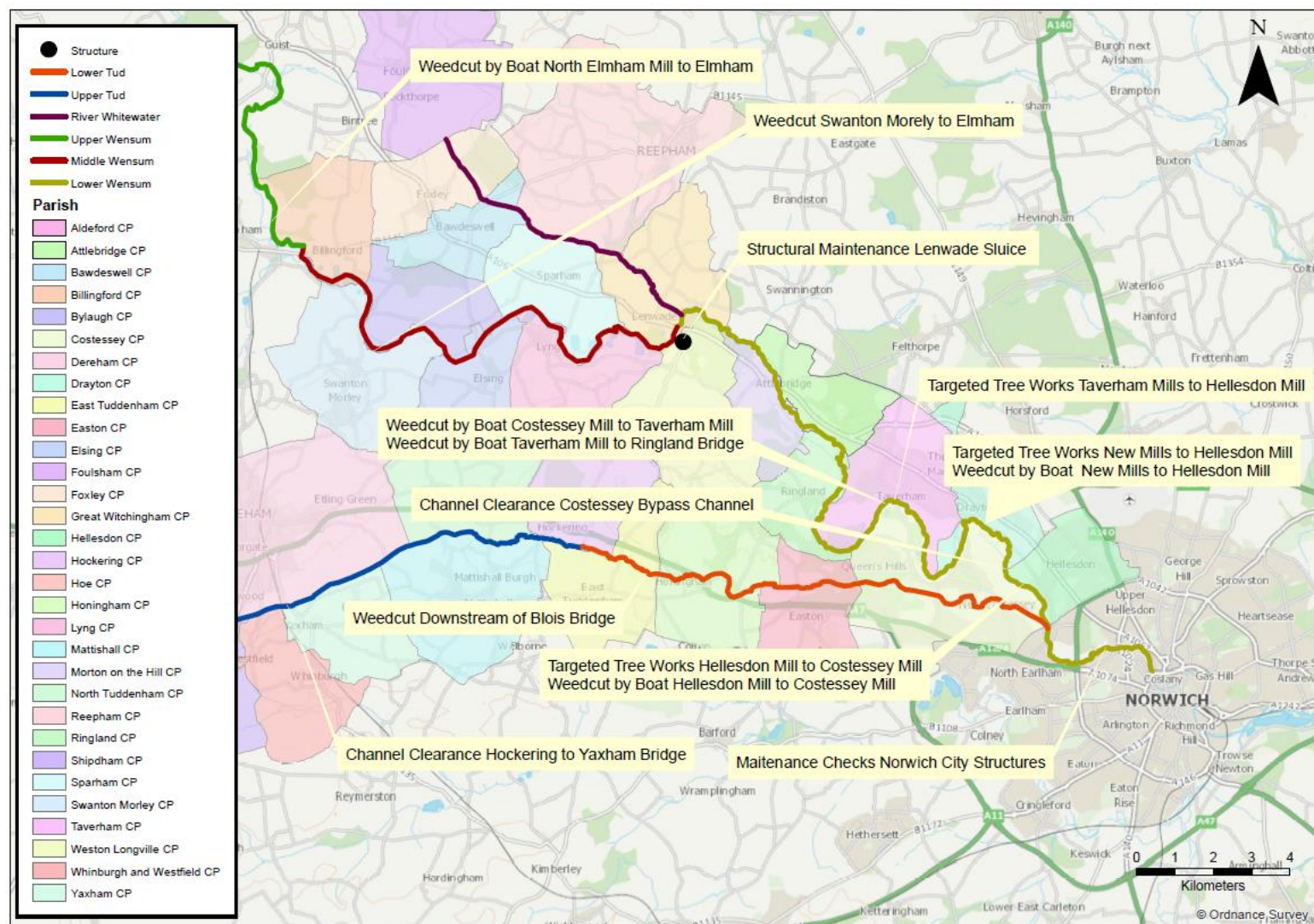
020302 55460

apnorfolk@environment-agency.gov.uk

customer service line
03708 506 506

incident hotline
0800 80 70 60

floodline
03459 88 11 88



Gemma Rivett <GemmaRivett@norfolkfoundation.com>

1 May 2024, 14:25
(7 days ago)

to

Dear Clerk,

I hope this email finds you well. I wanted to flag a funding opportunity with you which I thought might be of interest to your Parish Council, or to local charities, social enterprises, or voluntary groups you may be working with.

The **Countering Loneliness Innovation Fund (CLIF)** invites applications for projects which seek to reduce loneliness in the **Lakenham ward of Norwich** and **within the surrounding area of Reepham**. Please see the attached document which details the areas that are within the surrounding area of Reepham, characterised by an 8-mile radius.

Eligible applicants include community groups, charitable organisations, social enterprises, faith organisations, and Parish/Town Councils working within the defined areas. Examples of fundable projects range from community activities like book clubs, to one-on-one support, such as befriending schemes.

The Fund will prioritise innovative ideas as well as expanding existing projects which have an evidenced impact of reducing loneliness, particularly those that can demonstrate community partnerships, collaboration with social prescribers, and how they will measure the outcomes of their work.

Applications are currently open, and will close on **7th June 2024**, with funding decisions expected by the end of August. **Grants up to £5,000 are available**, with potential for larger amounts for developed activities or partnerships. If you are considering applying for over £5,000, please contact the Programmes Team using the details on our website.

Successful applicants are expected to utilise funds within 12 months and participate in a shared evaluation process, to include a network meeting within the first 3 months of funding.

For more information on the Fund and how to apply, please visit the Norfolk Community Foundation website: <https://www.norfolkfoundation.com/funding-support/grants/groups/countering-loneliness-innovation-fund/>

If you have any questions, please get in touch.

Best wishes,

Gemma Rivett
Programmes Advisor
Norfolk Community Foundation

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