

Bye Common Design Consultation Responses



Design Consultation

Event

A Public Consultation Event was held on Monday 3rd July 2023 at Winsford Village Hall. The event was held from 4-7pm, and members of the public were invited to drop in at any time to view the proposals and speak to the team.

Attendance and Response

Approximately 20-30 people attended the event and there were 5 written responses from members of the public.

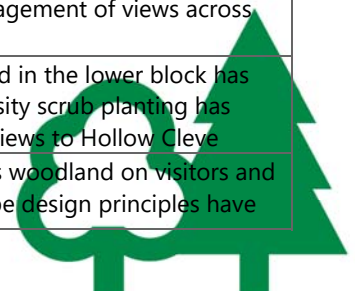
Additionally, the plans were published and advertised on Citizen Space. There were 4 written responses on Citizen Space. Written responses included Winsford Parish Council and a Parish Councillor as well as two other individuals.

Follow-up

Below are Forestry England's responses to comments regarding the design of the proposed woodland.



Feedback	Response
Site & Land Use	
Loss of Grazing Land	The woodland has been designed with grazing in mind. Across Bye Common 21Ha out of 51 Ha will be planted, the remainder is retained grassland to enable continued grazing at an appropriate level to maintain optimal grassland habitats. The site a Bye Common is a mix of the lowest provisional Agricultural Land Classification grades (4&5). The scheme uses the least productive agricultural land without impacting on moorland and protected or sensitive habitats.
Why are you planting here and not near nearer population centres that would provide greater amenity	The UK has a woodland creation target of 30,000ha p.a. with expectation of c.7,000ha in England with Woodland creation sites likely to be spread across the country as brought forward by landowners. The Forestry England Woodland Partnership programme operates nationwide working with public and private landowners. Our aim is to support government plans for woodland creation and nature recovery and we consider every site that gets submitted to the programme. Each site goes through a rigorous screening process before a decision is made to proceed or not.
Would there not be greater benefit in planting on poor quality sites in areas of the country short of woodland	We consider all sites that apply to the Forestry England Woodland Partnership.
Grassland is just as good as woodland for carbon sequestration	According to the latest Natural England Research Report the largest carbon sequestration rates amongst semi-natural habitats are in woodlands. Open habitats such as heathlands and semi-natural grasslands sequester and store more carbon than modern agricultural landscapes but typically store less carbon than peatlands, saltmarshes and woodlands. The semi-natural priority habitat grassland at Bye Common will not be planted and will continue to store carbon. The heavily grazed pasture is where the tree planting will take place. https://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/5419124441481216 https://www.exmoor-nationalpark.gov.uk/Whats-Special/woodland/climate
Visual Impact	
Loss of open views across the moor	A Landscape Appraisal was carried out in 2021, assessing landscape and visual impacts of potential woodland creation. As a result of this assessment and feedback from the landowner, the woodland has been designed to retain views across the moor. Planting has been kept off a large section of the hill and lower density scrub planting is situated further up the hill; these areas will be lower growing and less obstructive to views. We have carefully considered the height of trees at maturity and how far down the slope we can start planting whilst retaining views. We will also monitor this over time to ensure ongoing management of views across the moor.
View to Hollow Cleve	Following the public consultation, the woodland in the lower block has been pulled back from the path and lower density scrub planting has replaced the higher density planting to retain views to Hollow Cleve
Effect on visitors' moorland experience	We have carefully considered the design of this woodland on visitors and walkers along the public right of way. Landscape design principles have



	<p>been applied to reflect the genius loci of the area and the Exe Valley. Woodland is a strong characteristic of the valley as well as the open moorland. At Bye Common approximately 50% of the site has been left open and unplanted, creating a mosaic of habitats, and offering a visually diverse landscape to visitors.</p>
<p>We would like to see planting stop more than 10m from the top to ensure the taller trees do not over intrude on the skyline</p>	<p>We have carefully analysed the slope of the site and height of the trees to ensure that views are retained. The upper edge of the woodland is scalloped to look natural in the landscape and we have considered views from the opposite side of the valley towards the site. In leaving the top of the hill unplanted there is the risk of the woodland looking unnatural, which is why we have some lower density planting higher up the hill.</p>
<p>Planting on steep slopes represents great connectivity but would it be good to maintain a more open aspect on higher areas - Wood Pasture? - to keep the spectacular panoramic views.</p>	<p>As mentioned above we have designed the woodland to maintain the spectacular panoramic views as far as reasonably possible. The planting in higher areas will be lower density and lower growing species to maintain a more open landscape. We can vary the density of planting within these areas so that the lowest densities are on the highest points, giving a feathered edge to the woodland block.</p>
<p>Management & Maintenance</p>	
<p>How will you guarantee that the deer fencing will be removed?</p>	<p>The deer fencing will be replaced with stock fencing once the trees are established well enough to avoid damage from deer. This will form part of our woodland management plan.</p>
<p>Ongoing concern about commercial logging in the future. The road network locally struggle with existing large lorries</p>	<p>Traffic arising after establishment should be comparable with agricultural traffic as already using the local roads NB weight limit on bridge at Larcombe Foot specifically controls vehicle size at Bye Common.</p>
<p>Biodiversity & Species Selection</p>	
<p>Can you include more Hazel, also some Holly and less sycamore.</p>	<p>Since the Public Consultation we have added Hazel into the species mix.</p>
<p>Kemps Wood (opposite) is mainly peduncular oak and could be included rather than Sessile Oak</p>	<p>The native oak for the West coast is Sessile oak, being more suited to the warm, moist climate. Pedunculate oak predominates in the south and east. Hence why sessile oak was chosen for Bye Common</p>
<p>Loss of open meadow land with wild flowers</p>	<p>We have undertaken a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal and National Vegetation Classification Survey. Recommendations were made for planting on relatively species poor habitats, specifically areas of dense bracken and areas of poor non-priority grassland. The area of priority acidic grassland have been left unplanted with a recommended 10m buffer surrounding them.</p>
<p>Adverse effect on some plant and animal species</p>	<p>The PEA report states that tree planting within these areas is unlikely to have any significant negative impacts on any protected or notable species. As the habitats mature appropriate planting will add to the structural and species diversity across the site which would likely provide enhanced foraging, commuting and refuge for a range of species including bats, badger, breeding birds, reptiles, amphibians and invertebrates.</p>

Responses

Changes to red deer migration patterns due to the erection of deer fencing	The movement of deer was taken into consideration throughout the design process. We have left tracks and paths clear across the site and following the public consultation we have widened the distance between woodland blocks to a minimum of 25m as advised.
The potential effect on some protected species e.g. Adders	No evidence of reptiles was noted during the extended ecological surveys. Despite the largely north facing aspect of the site the mosaic of woodland, scrub, hedgerows, bracken and areas of taller grass land provide suitable foraging and basking habitat for widespread species of reptiles. The more heavily grazed areas, where planting is proposed are less suitable habitat, but may provide seasonal opportunities alongside other more suitable habitats on site. The woodland will provide suitable refuge opportunities.