

A new woodland at Hoarthorns Farm

Consultation report and our response to key issues raised

July 2025



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1. Executive summary

Between 6th May and 1 June 2025, we held a consultation on proposals for the designs of a new woodland on land at Hoarthorns, near Edge End in the Forest of Dean.

This report focuses on the feedback we received to the consultation and our response to the key issues raised.

We received 49 responses to the consultation. Whilst we received many broadly supportive comments, some were negative, and others raised questions and made suggestions.

After carefully considering the responses, further design work, and in response to consultation feedback, we have updated our proposed designs for the new woodland to include the following change:

- We have included open wide space broadleaf and fruit tree planting closest to Edge End to maintain views from immediate properties.

Over the coming week, we will be applying to the Forestry Commission for regulatory review ahead of planting the new woodland.

This report outlines our approach to the consultation, a summary of the key issues and questions raised, and our response.

2. About the Consultation

2.1 Introduction

Forestry England is creating a new 88 hectare woodland on land at Hoarthorns Farm, near Edge End, near Coleford in the Forest of Dean. The former agricultural land has been bought by Forestry England to create a thriving woodland which will be planted with mixed conifer and broadleaf trees, specially selected to be resilient to future climate conditions.

The new woodland will be open to the public for people to explore and enjoy, whilst also being a valuable place for wildlife and producing sustainable timber for a greener economy.

The consultation invited views from the public and stakeholders on our proposals for the planting and design of the new woodland. Feedback will help shape and inform our final designs which will be submitted to the Forestry Commission for regulatory review ahead of planting the new woodland.

2.2 Objectives of the new woodland

Our objectives for the new woodland are to:

- **Create a mixed resilient woodland:** plant a mix of trees to create species and structural diversity and to produce a lasting supply of certified sustainable timber
- **Improve woodland connectivity and enhance existing ancient woodland:** link adjacent ancient woodlands to improve habitat connectivity. Preserve hedges and create open spaces and areas to regrow naturally (natural regeneration) within the woodland for wildlife to thrive
- **Sequester atmospheric carbon:** help meet government net zero emissions goals by planting and managing woodland that will thrive in future climates and store carbon
- **Public access for health and wellbeing:** provide low-key recreation opportunities by improving access to the countryside for local residents and visitors.

2.3 Consultation purpose

The aims of the consultation were to:

- Provide the public and our stakeholders with sufficient information about our proposals to allow them to give informed responses and suggestions
- Understand the reasons for any issues or concerns about our proposals
- Identify any issues we might not already be aware of
- Provide adequate time for people to respond
- Consider all responses carefully ahead of making any changes to our proposals.

2.4 Early Engagement

Between, 8 January 2025 and 26 January 2025, we sent letters to 228 addresses close to the boundary of the proposed new woodland on land at Hoarthorns Farm. The letters included a map showing the boundary of the new woodland and invited people to share their thoughts, through an online survey, on what should be considered as we develop the designs for the new woodland.

We also sent emails, with a copy of the letter, advising local elected representatives, about the local engagement that was taking place within the areas they represent. These included:

- MP for the Forest of Dean.
- Parish councils of West Dean and English Bicknor.
- District and Ward members for Gloucestershire County Council and Forest of Dean District Council.
- The Steward for the verderers for the Forest of Dean.

We received 41 responses, including a response from West Dean Parish Council.

2.5 Feedback to early engagement

Feedback to our early engagement included general positive comments as well as questions and concerns which focused on the following themes:

1. **Users of the new woodland** - Concern about the use of the new woodland by downhill mountain bikes and impact of horse riding and cycling on ancient pastureland; Concern about the impact of dogs on cattle and sheep in the area. Suggestions to include horse riding, and paths for dog walking, walkers, joggers and cyclists as well as benches and dog waste bins.

2. **Tree species and woodland planting** - Suggestions to use a variety of trees (native, broadleaf, evergreens) that can thrive in a changing climate; aim for a natural design and avoid planting in rows; suggestions for the inclusion of fruit trees and species that will attract butterflies and support wildlife and include wildflower and meadow grasses.
3. **Traffic and parking** - Concerns about the impact of an increase in traffic and parking on narrow access roads; Suggestions to include parking and consider the narrow lanes when planning for access and maintenance.
4. **Wildlife and habitat** - Concerns about the management of wild boar and deer; the impact of the new woodland on wildlife and the disruption of existing migratory route (on the current farmland) connecting the Wye to the Severn. Suggestions to consider the impact of the new woodland on the SSSI; include habitat for specific species; include fencing to manage the boar.
5. **Woodland design** - Request that all relevant legislation is followed when planning for the new woodland. Suggestions for the forest tracks to follow contours (not straight lines) and include a pond; Questions about the retention of the existing hedgerow boundaries, the use of the existing buildings on the site and the treatment of the different areas indicated on the map.
7. **Access and footpaths** - Suggestions to preserve all existing rights of way and include accessible waymarked trails that would link other forest areas and provide circular walks; Suggestions to include access to the new woodland from Carterspiece; Edge End and Ninewells.
8. **Use of Agricultural Land** - Concerns about the use of agricultural land for new woodland.
9. **Woodland management and maintenance** - Questions about maintenance of the new woodland and the management of contractors.
10. **Community involvement and communication** - Suggestions for involving local children and children and publicising the new woodland.
11. **Views** - Concern about changing views down the valley and the potential impact on seasonal variation.
12. **Drainage, flooding and water management** - Consider existing watercourses and understand local flooding issues as part of your planning and liaise with the Forest of Dean District Council.

Appendix A Sets out how our designs have been shaped by this feedback and addresses some of the key issues raised. Feedback to this early engagement, together with further design and survey work, and engagement with other

stakeholders such as Natural England, helped to shape the design proposals we presented for public consultation.

2.6 Who we consulted - public consultation

Our consultation was open to anyone who lived or worked in the local area or had an interest in our proposals.

- We focused our publicity on people living in the local area, as well as stakeholders (officer and elected local ward members) from Gloucestershire County Council and the Forest of Dean District Council, and the Parish Councils of West Dean and English Bicknor.
- We also told the statutory stakeholders we consult with when creating a new woodland, including Natural England and the Environment Agency.

The list of stakeholders we contacted is included in **Appendix F**.

2.7 Dates and Duration

The consultation for the new woodland was open for four weeks from 6th May to 1st June 2025.

2.8 What we asked

The consultation survey included one open question inviting written feedback or questions about our proposed plans for the new woodland at Hoarthorns.

We also asked respondents to give their name and email address and, where applicable, supply details of the organisation on whose behalf they were responding.

The survey we published on the website, is included in **Appendix C**.

2.9 Methods of responding

Respondents to the consultation were invited to give their views by:

- Completing the questionnaire included on our website at: [New woodland - Hoarthorns - Forestry Commission - Citizen Space](#)
- Giving comments by email to Woodland.creation@forestryengland.uk

- Leaving comments at the public consultation drop in event on Thursday 22nd May 2025, 4pm - 7pm at Berry Hill Memorial Hut, Park Road, Berry Hill, Coleford, GL16 7QU
- Feedback received at the drop in event is summarised separately in section 3.5 of this report.

2.10 Consultation materials and publicity

2.10.1 Consultation materials

We published consultation information about the new woodland on our consultation website at: [New woodland - Hoarthorns - Forestry Commission - Citizen Space](#)

The consultation information included:

- An overview of the new woodland creation programme and tree planting objectives.
- A site appraisal - with photographs and maps to give context.
- An overview of the surveys undertaken, our objectives and principles, that have informed our design proposals for the new woodland.
- An overview of planting types included in the proposals.
- Visuals of how the new woodland might look soon after planting and, in the future.
- Information on how to respond to the consultation.

2.10.2 Consultation activity

We publicised the consultation in the following ways:

- **Media release:** distributed to local news outlets.
- **Dedicated web page:** on the Forestry England website at: New woodland at Hoarthorns Farm | Forestry England
- **Citizen space consultation portal:** [New woodland - Hoarthorns - Forestry Commission - Citizen Space](#)
- **Emails:** to local residents
- **Letters/emails:** to stakeholders

- **Posters:** a poster publicising the consultation and drop in event was put up in several locations near each of the sites. Posters were also shared with the local parish councils for inclusion on their noticeboards/websites.
- **Social media:** Posts on the Forestry England Facebook page for the Forest of Dean- promoting the launch of the consultation and the drop-in event
- **Consultation drop in event:** we held a drop in event at Berry Hill Memorial Hut on Thursday 22nd May. The event showed the information already published on the website on large posters around the venue and Forestry England staff were on hand to talk about the proposals, answer questions or queries, and listen to any concerns from those attending.

Attendees were also encouraged to leave immediate feedback on the comments board and to respond to the consultation formally via the online survey, by email, or by completing a hard copy of the consultation questionnaire. We also asked attendees to leave their contact details if they would like to be kept updated about the proposals.

2.10.3 Analysis of consultation responses

Responses received to the consultation were analysed by assigning (or coding) the points made by each respondent to one or more codes within a code frame. Codes were organised by theme and separated into and questions, comments or suggestions and concerns/negative comments.

Each code reflects a point raised by 1 or more individuals in a variety of ways. From this it was possible to count how many times the same or similar points had been raised by respondents.

3. Consultation feedback

We received 49 individual responses to the Hoarthorns consultation including 5 from stakeholders (listed in **Appendix F**).

3.1 Consultation response overview

The 49 responses were coded into 136 comments 18 themes and sub-categorised as into a concern, question or comment and suggestion. Feedback received at the consultation event is set out in section 3.6 of this document.

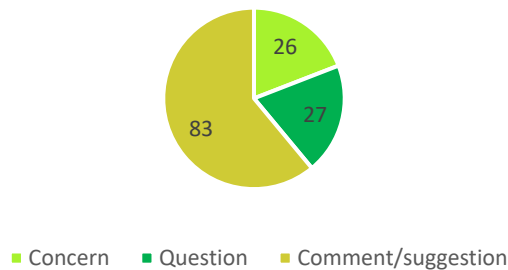


Figure 1: Overview of 49 responses by comment

3.2 Consultation response by theme

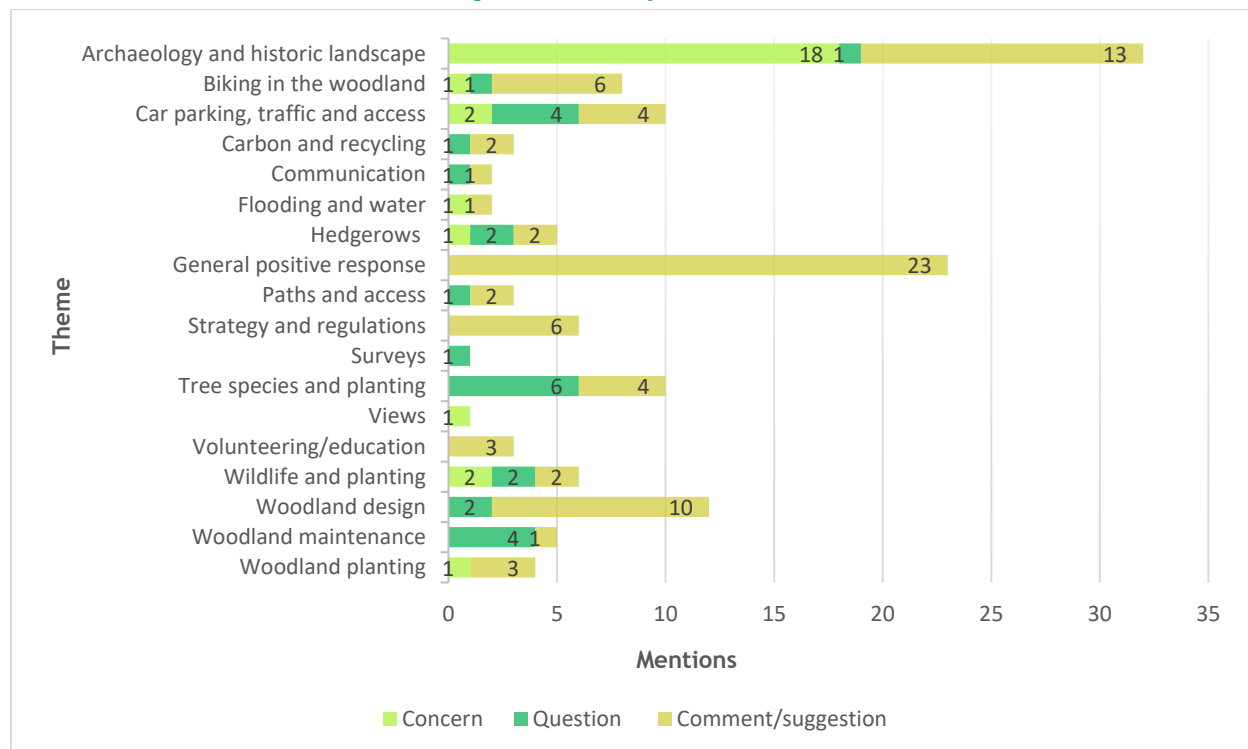


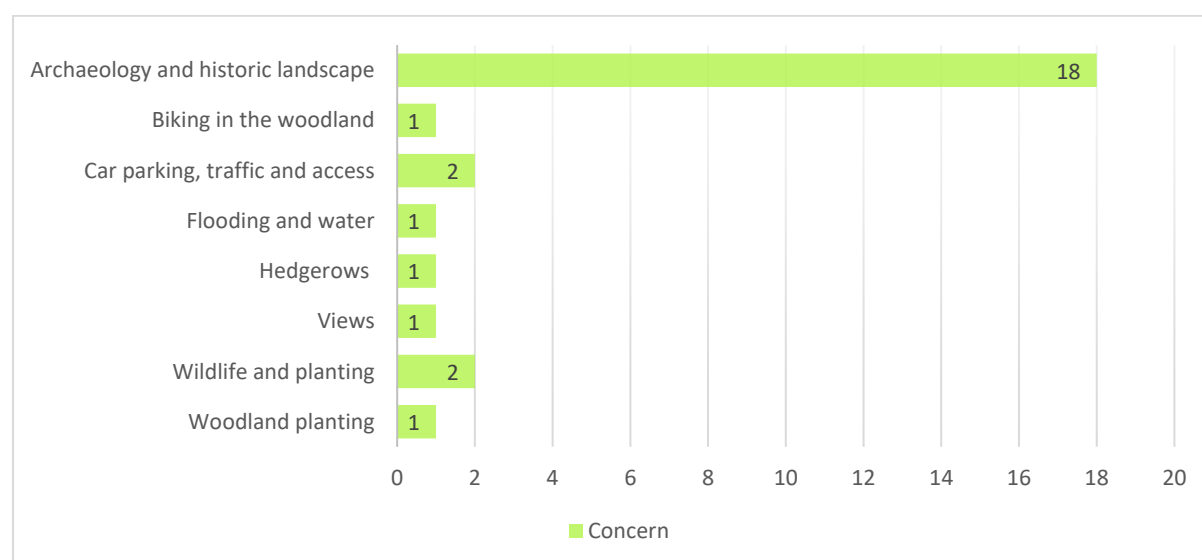
Figure 2: Responses by theme - 49 responses, 18 themes

3.3 Positive comments

We received 23 general overarching positive/supportive comments. These included: 'The proposal seems well thought out and future looking'; 'The proposals look fair and balanced'; 'Overall I love the plans'; 'Keep up the good work'; 'Great to see expanded areas of woodland'; 'I'm excited to see it happen and watch it grow'; 'Great idea and fully supportive of introducing great biodiversity to the area'.

3.4 Negative comments/concerns

We received 27 negative comments/concerns.



Key negative comments and concerns included:

1. Archaeology and historic landscape

Comments objecting to the proposals suggesting that there is already enough woodland in the area and that the focus should be on protecting and managing the existing woodlands.

Concern that the site is on ancient farmland where there are archaeological remains and the new woodland will destroy a historical site.

Concern that the site is within the Wye Valley National landscape and the site should be preserved and left without tree cover.

Concern about the setting of the Grade II listed Hoarthorns Farmhouse and suggestion this should be taken into consideration when developing the plans.

2. Biking in the new Woodland

Concern about the use of dirt bikes at the Old Picnic area.

3. Car parking and access

Concern about the increase in footfall along the access track from the A4136 and inappropriate parking by visitors to the new woodland.

4. Flooding and water

Concern that flood/rainwater from the road and Edge End will be diverted and the impact on neighbouring property.

5. Hedgerows

Maintain hedgerows and trees to prevent obstruction and risk to public safety.

6. Views

Concern about the impact on view from trees planted in the existing woodland.

7. Wildlife and planting

Concern about presence of badgers and red listed bird species in the area.

8. Woodland planting

Concern about impact of harvesting work in the local area.

3.5 Questions, comments and suggestions

In addition to the 23 general positive comments (see section 3.3), we received a further 26 questions and 83 comments and suggestions.

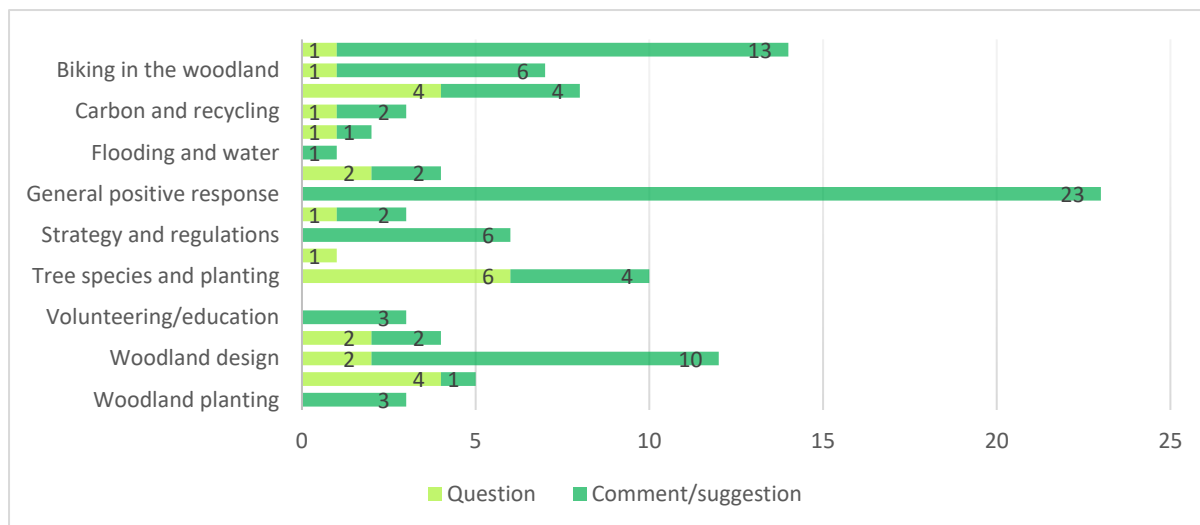


Figure 3: Comments, suggestions and questions

The comments, questions and suggestions in the top 6 most mentioned themes are summarised below. All feedback is included in the code frame in Appendix E.

1. Archaeology and historic landscape

Comments about the presence of archaeological remains, and that the archaeology of the areas should be respected during preparation and planting works.

Suggestion to retain the existing landscape as ancient farmland and to discuss the planting proposals close to the Grade 11 listed Hoarthorns Farmhouse with the Forest of Dean District Council.

Suggestion to avoid the location of tracks along the line of the linear earthworks or potential hollows and mounds and avoid planting within 10 metres of possible scowles (iron extraction quarry) and hollows and mounds.

2. Woodland design

Create/include a pond and wetlands; Include open areas and areas of scrubby grassland and scattered trees and leave some woodland without public access left purely for nature.

Preference for less grassland for grazing and more forest and suggestion to develop woodland pasture across the whole site and use native grazing animals.

3. Car parking, traffic and access

Suggestions for the inclusion and suggestions for the exclusion of parking at the new woodland, with a specific suggestion to include parking at Hoarthorns Farm and to include passing spaces for forestry vehicles along the access track.

4. Tree species and planting

Questions asking how climate change has been factored into the tree selection, with specific suggestions to include less conifer, and plant an area exclusively for oak. Questions about what influences the final selection of trees and the sourcing and provenance of the native species that will be planted; suggestions for the inclusion of ground flora, including species like bluebells and wild garlic.

5. Biking in the woodland

Comments requesting the inclusion of bike and gravel tracks and routes, as well as comments pleased that no cycling trails are planned and seeking confirmation that mountain biking will not be permitted in the new woodland.

6. Strategy and regulations

Comments seeking assurances that all planting proposals comply with relevant legislation protecting historic landscapes and Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs), including adherence to the Burial Act 1857 if cremation sites are discovered. Comments confirming that the proposals align with multiple aims of the Wye Valley National Landscape, including biodiversity, landscape character, historic environment, and woodland restoration.

The code frames summarising the comments received to the consultation are included in **Appendix E**.

3.6 Feedback from the consultation drop in event

Over 35 people attended the event which displayed the information already published on the [consultation website](#) on large posters around the venue. Forestry England staff were on hand to talk about the proposals, answer questions or queries and listen to any concerns from those attending.

Attendees were also encouraged to leave immediate feedback on sticky notes on the comments board. Nine sticky notes were left. Many of the comments mirrored those also received from the formal consultation responses. The comments are summarised below:

Supportive: general approval of the plan's appearance and intent

- 'Like the look of the plan'
- 'fantastic', 'wonderful etc etc.'
- 'Looks good to me, hope I'm still around to enjoy it!'
- 'Very much approve the plan esp the mix of woodland & open space in the middle. Got to be good for biodiversity'

Concerns

- Concern about the ‘inability to control wild boar’
- Maintenance of the track at Lower Carterspiece Farm
- Concern and opposition about the impact on agricultural land (even if it is classified as grade 3 or below) and the planting of more trees ‘farmland should stay farmland’ and ‘this is agricultural land’; ‘struggle to understand how we can justify more trees.’
- Frustration that the process feels like a directive rather than a genuine consultation: ‘Not a consultation telling us what you are going to do’

Suggestions

- Include more softwood species for local timber production
- Ensure a balanced mix of woodland and open space to support biodiversity

We also asked attendees to leave their contact details if they would like to be kept updated about the proposals.

4. Summary of stakeholder responses

We received formal responses from the following stakeholders during the public consultation period. The stakeholder feedback has been included in the analysis.

Hoarthorns Farm Stakeholder Responses
Gloucestershire County Council County archaeologist Planning (including: approach to archaeological assets; public rights of way; flood risk management; minerals and waste planning; strategic planning)
West Dean Parish Council
Wye Valley National Landscapes
Environment Agency
Natural England

Gloucestershire County Council

Gloucestershire County Council officers - broadly supportive of the Hoarthorns woodland proposal for its climate benefits, including carbon sequestration, and exclusion of parking infrastructure, and the use of climate-resilient tree species. Request for further detail on some aspects of delivering the project including Forestry England’s fleet emissions standards and the materials used in tree planting. Suggestion that the proposal should align with the forthcoming Local Nature Recovery Strategy and that public footpaths must remain accessible and unobstructed. The project is seen as a strategic opportunity to enhance habitat connectivity between the Forest of Dean and the Wye Valley. No concerns were raised by flood risk, minerals and waste, or road safety officers.

County Archaeologist: Identified archaeological features within or near the proposed woodland planting area include earthworks such as lynchets (HER 6255), a Grade II listed farmhouse (HER 12252), possible Roman era scowles (HERs 25036 and 25797), linear earthworks (HER 33256), and mounds and hollows of uncertain origin (HER 33261). Advised that these heritage assets require careful consideration to avoid damage during forestry operations. Recommended mitigations include avoiding the creation of new tracks or extraction routes across these features and maintaining planting buffers—typically 10 metres—around sensitive areas to minimise disturbance and preserve their archaeological integrity.

West Dean Parish Council - Expressed concerns about aspects of the historic landscape of the Joyford and Hoarthorns Farm area and its setting within conservation areas. Pleased that the proposals appear to protect the ancient hedgerows and the inclusion of open spaces to allow open vistas in the Wye Valley. Referenced hedgerow regulations to protect hedgerows and requested that consideration is given to the setting of Hoarthorns Farmhouse (grade 11 listed building) in our planning for the new woodland. Request that, should the new woodland go ahead, its delivery will be fully compliant with relevant legislation to protect historic and nationally important landscapes and SSSI. Provides additional information about the wider cultural landscape, history and archaeology of the site and request that care is taken to preserve what may be a significant part of the local landscape.

Wye Valley National Landscapes - The Wye Valley National Landscape team expressed support for the woodland planting proposals at Hoarthorns Farm. They welcomed the inclusion of diverse habitats such as natural regeneration, orchards, wet woodland, and species-rich grasslands, which align with their earlier feedback and contribute positively to habitat diversity, climate adaptation, and landscape character. The plans align with multiple aims and strategic objectives of the Wye Valley AONB Management Plan (2021-26), including those related to landscape, biodiversity, historic environment, and sustainable woodland management. They are supportive of the proposed conversion of arable land to diverse meadow grassland, as well as the plans to work towards the restoration of the grassland local wildlife site within the landholding. The response concludes that the proposals meet the strengthened duty under Section 85 of the CRoW Act and contribute to national targets for habitat restoration and increased woodland cover.

Environment Agency - Suggestions for buffer zones around ditches and flood defences, and between sites where a occurrences of significant soil disturbance has occurred due to risk of sediment pollution; Records of badgers in the area and recommendation for a walkover/survey; Presence of red listed protected species on the site - undertake a bird nesting/breeding survey should vegetation clearance be planned for breeding season; ensure tree species are of local provenance; recommendation to split planting across the site over a number of years to

increase the diversity in age and class of the trees and suggestion to make efforts to remove the plastic tubing after the trees have reached 3 - 4 years of age

Natural England - Confirmed that issues raised in early engagement had been addressed and were supportive of the woodland creation scheme at Hoarthorns.

5. Our responses to issues raised

We have considered all the feedback we received to the consultation, and our responses to the key issues raised are set out on the following pages.

We have grouped the issues into broad themes for a more readily understood overview of the issues. Many respondents made positive comments about the proposals, all of which have been noted. For conciseness, these have not all been included.

Following further design work and in response to consultation feedback, we have updated our proposed designs for the new woodland to include the following change:

- We have included open wide space broadleaf and fruit tree planting closest to Edge End to maintain views from immediate properties

Our response to the key issues raised during the consultation are set out below:

1. Archaeology

1.1 Concerns about aspects of the historic landscape and possible location of mediaeval archaeological findings such as a Roman temple and links to ancient tribal communities - the site should be preserved and left without tree cover as the new woodland will destroy a historical site, is on ancient farmland and is within the Wye Valley National Landscape.

As part of our planning process, we undertook a comprehensive review of the historic landscape, including County Historic Environment Records (HER), historic maps, LIDAR data, and aerial imagery. This identified heritage features to be aware of as well as management practices to consider for the protection of those features. Notably, traces of what appeared to be Roman paving were found on historic maps. Although not recorded in the HER, we commissioned a geophysical survey of the entire field to investigate further. While no additional Roman

remains were confirmed, the survey did detect magnetic anomalies and a possible bank feature, supporting the area's archaeological interest.

In response, we have excluded these features from planting and established protective buffer zones around them. These areas will also be avoided by any associated infrastructure, such as forest roads and tracks.

We engaged early with the Wye Valley National Landscape team, both before acquiring the site, and throughout the planning process. Their feedback confirmed that our woodland creation plans align with their key objectives around landscape, biodiversity, heritage, woodland, trees and forestry. Cotswold Archaeology will also be doing a walkover survey of the site.

1.2 What are the identified underground heritage features?

Advice confirmed the presence of archaeological features within or near the proposed woodland planting area including linear earthworks, lynchets, mounds, hollows and scowles. Where appropriate to protect these features, the design includes natural regeneration and low density planting

1.3 Comply with the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000, clauses 82, 83, and 85

As part of our design process and consultation, we have engaged with the Wye Valley National Landscapes and Natural England, and we will comply with all relevant legislation.

1.4 There is already enough woodland - the site is one of the few natural open spaces in the area and the focus should be on protecting and managing the existing woodland.

The site is currently arable and grazed farmland. The proposed plan is to transform it into a diverse landscape featuring woodland planting, natural colonisation, orchard planting, open spaces, shrub planting and wet woodland. This will create a rich mosaic of habitats that will enhance and complement the site's existing natural features.

1.5 Take the Grade II listed farmhouse into consideration when developing plans and discuss the planting proposals close to Hoarthorns Farmhouse (Grade II listed) with the Conservation Officer at the Forest of Dean District Council.

The Grade II listed farmhouse was carefully considered during the design process. Its immediate setting remains unchanged. The nearest new planting, approximately 80 metres from the farmhouse, will consist of traditional orchard species, reflecting the priority orchard habitat found in the surrounding fields. We have contacted the Conservation Officer about our proposals.

1.6 Respect the archaeology of the area during preparation and planting works. Presence of linear earthworks, hollows, mounds and scowles (Iron extraction quarry) and recommendations to avoid locating tracks along the lines of these features or planting within 10 metres of them.

We have mapped all known archaeological features and conducted additional geophysical surveys in the fields to the west where the forest road is proposed. All archaeological features have been assessed on-site and assigned 10-metre buffers, following guidance from our Historic Environment Advisor.

2. Biking in the woodland

2.1 Allow mountain and off road biking in the new woodland and suggestions for specific gravel track cycle routes.

The new paths within the new woodland will be generally unsurfaced grass rides and stone vehicle tracks. Cycling is only permitted within Forestry England woodlands on hard stoned tracks and forest roads and we have no plans to include new mountain biking or specific gravel track cycle routes in the new woodland.

The new woodland at Hoarthorns will give local people a quieter area to enjoy, away from the busier areas of the Forest such as Symonds Yat, Beechenhurst or the Forest of Dean Cycle Centre which are our day out destination and discovery sites.

2.2 Concern about dirt bikes at the old picnic area

Forestry England generally prohibits the use of off-road motorbikes (including dirt bikes) on its land. This includes trails, bridleways and woodland tracks owned by Forestry England. Riding without permission is considered illegal. Incidents involving the use of dirt bikes at the old picnic area should be reported to the police.

3. Car parking, traffic and vehicle access

3.1 Requests to include/not include parking and concerns about an increase in footfall, traffic and inappropriate parking on the access track from the A4136

We have no plans to include visitor or other recreational facilities in the new woodland and therefore our proposal does not include public parking. We anticipate that most visitors to the new woodland will do so on foot via the existing public rights of way, paths and grass rides and we have no plans or funding to include parking. If inappropriate parking becomes a problem, we will explore ways to limit access to the track off the A4136, such as installing a barrier and include signs.

3.2 Concern about impact of harvesting work in local area/what route will be used for harvesting vehicles?

We acknowledge concerns about potential traffic impacts associated with timber harvesting. However, it is important to note that harvesting is not expected to take place for around 20 to 25 years. Our current plans are for the timber to be removed from the woodland via a new improved road from the A4136. When the time comes, we will work closely with the local transport authority and neighbours about suitable routes and implement appropriate traffic management measures to minimise disruption to the community.

3.3 What will happen to the small Forestry England carpark (the old picnic area) near Carterspiece Farm?

The site is used by Forestry England for maintenance operations and contractor access. We currently have no plans to reopen the site for public use.

3.4 Will there be signage at the entrance to the access track off the A4136/ within the new woodland?

We don't expect to see a significant increase in visitor numbers and have no plans to visually promote access to the new woodland site (for example with signage) from the A4136.

To preserve the natural beauty of the area, signage within the new woodland will be kept to a minimum. At public access points where paths connect with our land, we will assess the need for signage as part of our overall signage strategy. Where Public Rights of Way (PROW) cross the site, we will install fingerpost signs to guide walkers appropriately.

4. Carbon and recycling

4.1 Provide more information about Forestry England's fleet vehicle emissions standards along with the types of materials used in tree planting and maintenance.

We've set a science-based target to decarbonise our organisation, to remove our dependence on fossil fuels, to meet net zero greenhouse gas emission targets.

Where possible, we are replacing fleet vehicles with electric and low emission models. Our target is to transition all existing conventional fuel car and van fleet vehicles to [Zero Emission Vehicles](#) by 2035.

Forestry England use various materials for tree planting and maintenance, including seeds, saplings, tree shelters, and fencing. Trees planted within the new woodland will be registered as part of the [Woodland Carbon Code](#). This is a UK quality assurance standard for woodland carbon projects. Most of our trees are grown at Forestry England's nursery in Cheshire – a peat-free site that follows sustainable practices and high environmental standards. All fencing timber is FSC and untreated. Where possible we reuse plastic tree tubes for community projects. If they are unable to be reused, they can be recycled into plastic products such as dog kennels and chicken coops.

Information about our work to achieve net zero emissions can be viewed here:
[Cutting our carbon emissions | Forestry England](#)

4.2 Are tree guards made of plastic or are they bio-degradable? If plastic, are they collected when trees are mature, are they recycled, will they be logged with Citizen Science's "Spot the Plastic"? Programme/recycle tree guards after 3-4 years

We are proposing to fence most of the woodland so only a few very small areas will require the use of tree guards (about 5% of the whole tree planting area). The tree guards will be plastic and recyclable and, depending on availability, will be green. Forestry England's policy is for all tree guards to be collected and removed from sites at the end of their useful life - about 10 -15 years after planting. We keep track of areas where tree guards have been used, so that once they've served their purpose, we can send them to be recycled.

5. Hedgerows

5.1 Protect all hedgerows on the site and comply with Hedgerow regulations. Ensure 6 metre protection strip is provided either side of the field boundaries to protect hedgerows

We will comply with [the Management of Hedgerow Regulations 2024](#). These guidelines provide a consistent approach for their protection across the UK and, at a minimum, require a 2 metre buffer strip, measured from the centre of a hedgerow, where a green cover will be established and maintained. At Hoarthorns, we have included 10 metre buffers to hedgerows. For the public rights of way, the buffers are more varied to be more interesting visually. They generally range from between 5 and 10 metres but no less than 2 metres.

5.2 Hedgerows are not marked on the plans as 'ancient' and being of protected importance - will the ancient hedgerows and other hedgerows on the site be maintained long term?

The ecological survey identified the presence of species rich hedgerows on the site. We do not plan to remove these or any of the other existing hedgerows. These will eventually grow out naturally, except where targeted maintenance is required to ensure access, visibility, or ecological balance.

5.3 Will contractors be aware that a protection strip should be provided either side of the field boundaries to protect hedgerows?

The exclusion zones will be clearly marked up on the operational maps used by Forestry England staff and our contractors when creating the new woodland.

5.4 Maintain and enhance existing bat flightlines. Wye Valley and Forest of Dean bat sites SAC and part of the Upper Wye Gorge SSSI is designated for lesser horseshoe and greater horseshoe bats - engage with neighbouring landowners to build up resilient hedgerows to create flightlines and maintain open ride network -

A suite of surveys are currently being undertaken to map the current bat activity within the site and identify key flightlines and foraging areas. A Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) has been undertaken to determine the potential impact of the proposed woodland creation on the Wye Valley and Forest of Dean bat sites SAC.

Existing hedgerows and woodland within the site will be retained. We have added woodland edges and wide rides to our design that will create sheltered, linear corridors, strengthening the existing connectivity of the site in the wider landscape. These edges will eventually provide protection for bats from predators and wind, maintain low light levels and support a rich diversity of insects - an essential food source for bats. Plans for conservation grazing on the site will also provide suitable conditions for dung beetles, an important food source for greater horseshoe bats.

6. Paths and Access

6.1 Public Rights of Way should be maintained and kept free of any tree planting (and other barriers to that effect), to ensure access is maintained for the public.

Forestry England will ensure the public footpaths within the woodland site remain free from tree planting or other obstructions, to maintain public access. The footpaths have been fully incorporated into our designs.

6.2 Where public footpaths are on the site are unenclosed then they should be two metres wide.

To create more visual interest in the new woodland, we have included varied buffers along the PRoWs. These are more than 2 metres and generally range from between 5 and 10 metres (Footpaths on the site include English Bicknor 24/REB24, REB25, REB27, West Dean 2/RWD2 and the Wysis Way).

6.3 Where will the public access the new woodland?

The new woodland at Hoarthorns will be open to the public and provide a quiet space for local people to enjoy. Once we have finished creating the woodland we will dedicate it under the Countryside and Rights of Way act so people can explore the site.

Pedestrians will be able to visit the new woodland via the network of existing public rights of way, including the Wysis Way, a 55 mile public footpath that crosses distinctive areas of the Forest of Dean, Severn Vale and the Cotswolds. These paths, and a network of new unsurfaced grass routes and new or upgraded operational forest tracks will give access for woodland maintenance and for people to explore the new woodland.

There is public access to the new woodland long the Wysis Way which runs West to East from south of English Bicknor to south of Carterspiece and Edge End. The entrances are marked with an A on the final design maps.

7. Strategy and Policy

7.1 Recommendations and requests for assurance that relevant legislation, planning policy and guidance will be followed by Forestry England as the new woodland progresses (The Burial Act 1857; Compliance with legislation to protect historic and nationally important landscapes and areas of SSI)

Forestry England will comply with all relevant legislation when creating the new woodland.

7.2 Consider the woodland proposals in conjunction with the draft Gloucestershire Local Nature Recovery Strategy, which is due for public consultation this Autumn

We engaged with Gloucestershire Wildlife Trust about the Local Nature Recovery Strategy in the early stages of our planning for the new woodland and their feedback is reflected in our designs. We are in ongoing discussions with the trust as we progress with our plans for the planting and management of the new woodland.

8. Surveys

8.1 Are there plans to do a baseline National Vegetation Classification (NVC) survey of the priority grassland and submit ecological or habitat data to the Gloucestershire Centre for Environmental Records (GCER)?

Yes, while it won't be a full NVC survey, a baseline Preliminary Habitat Assessment (PHA) will be carried out as part of the design work for the new woodland. This will help inform the Gloucestershire Centre for Environmental Records (GCER) submission and ensure the grassland is appropriately considered.

9. Tree species and planting

9.1 Include less conifer planting

Conifers will play a key role in supporting the long-term success of the woodland at Hoarthorns, making up around 35% of the planting area. Their fast growth makes them highly effective at capturing and storing carbon, contributing to climate change mitigation, while also providing a sustainable source of domestic timber that helps reduce reliance on imports. The remaining 65% of the woodland will be planted with broadleaf species, creating a diverse and resilient woodland that supports wildlife, seasonal interest and long term biodiversity.

9.2 Plant some areas with only oak varieties - they are slow growing and can struggle to survive when planted in a mixed plot

The oaks at Hoarthorns will be planted in blocks or rows to support healthy growth and ease of management. They are not expected to struggle, as the species selected for planting in and around the oak areas are compatible companions that

thrive in similar conditions. These may include species such as hazel, wild cherry, small leaved lime and hornbeam which can provide structural diversity, seasonal interest, and ecological support without competing with the oaks.

9.3 Will ground flora be planted as part of the woodland establishment - plant groups of bluebells, wild garlic etc within broadleaf areas

We do not plan to plant ground flora such as bluebells or wild garlic as part of the woodland establishment. The site is located close to areas of ancient woodland, which already support a rich and diverse ground flora. Over time, many of these species are expected to naturally spread into the new woodland, helping to create a more authentic and ecologically connected habitat. This approach supports natural processes while reducing disturbance and the risk of introducing non-local provenance plants.

9.4 Will native species be of local provenance?

While we are committed to planting native species, not all will be of strictly local provenance. Most of our trees are grown at Forestry England's nursery in Cheshire – a site that follows sustainable practices and high environmental standards. All planting stock comes from [UK Plant Healthy certified nurseries](#), ensuring biosecurity and resilience.

Although local provenance is often desirable, in this case, it may not offer the best long-term outcomes. Locally sourced trees may struggle to adapt to future climate conditions, so we are selecting native species from a broader UK provenance range that are better suited to thrive in a changing climate while still supporting local biodiversity.

9.5 What influences the final selection of trees - use of could rather than would be planted?

While our proposed designs include a selection of tree species suitable for the new woodland site, the final choice of trees will ultimately depend on availability at the time of planting, ensuring they remain appropriate for the site conditions.

9.6 Has climate change been factored in when considering tree selection - so that in 100 years trees will still be well suited?

We use a combination of tools and assessments to help plan our forests. Each site is carefully assessed for its characteristics, such as its soil type, aspect and microclimate, which can all have big impacts on whether different trees will thrive. Forest Research's [Ecological Site Classification](#) (ESC) tool helps us choose the right species.

We also use a [climate matching tool](#) that matches geographic locations so that we can see which places in the world currently experience the climate we are projected to have in future. We can compare these different places to help us plan which tree species will be suited to a site, now and in future.

9.7 Will minor species planted include local and nationally scarce native species suited to the site

Minor species planted at the site will include wild service tree, a nationally scarce native species. In addition, orchard planting will be incorporated into the new woodland. While the individual tree species used in the orchard may not be rare, orchard habitat itself is considered valuable and increasingly uncommon.

The final selection of species will also consider the availability of stock at the time of planting.

10. Views

10.1 If the woodlands are left to grow then it will impact the view - can the existing trees be topped whilst planting the new woodland?

We've carefully considered the views when planning this new woodland, especially from Edge End. The woodland will be looked after following a management plan, and we have no plans to cut the tops off the existing trees.

11. Volunteering/tree planting

11.1 Will there be volunteer or tree planting opportunities?

Forestry England works with many 'friends of' societies and community groups that help manage our woodlands. Whilst we have limited resource to support long term volunteering opportunities on the site, we will monitor use and interest as part of our wider engagement plans across the Forest of Dean.

We'd be happy to explore the idea of a community tree planting day. This could include the planting of the orchard, creating a meaningful connection between the woodland and the local community. We will explore the possibility for making this part of a community-led planting day.

12. Woodland planting, design, the environment and wildlife

12.1 Will there be habitat for butterflies?

Our objectives for this new woodland include creating diverse and resilient ecosystems that will benefit a broad spectrum of wildlife. We plan to include a wide range of native trees and shrubs including broadleaved trees such as oak and small leaved lime which will benefit a wide variety of animals and vertebrates, including butterflies. We have also included open habitat and buffer zones to create a diverse mosaic of habitats that will benefit the biodiversity on the site.

12.2 Are there any particularly important wildlife species in the area/presence of badgers, including red listed and protected species and suggestions for surveys ahead of planting?

We have obtained information from the Local Environmental Records Centre (LERC) and conducted an ecological survey. Whilst these did not identify badgers, breeding birds or other important wildlife species as being present on the site, where potential habitat is identified we will include appropriate buffers. However, the area is designated for lesser horseshoe and greater horseshoe bats, and we are

undertaking surveys to map the current bat activity within the site and identify key flightlines and foraging areas (see section 5 above). The design includes open habitats on the site which will provide additional suitable foraging habitats for bat species.

12.3 Include natural colonisation next to Hoarthorns Wood

There is no natural colonisation directly next to Hoarthorns Wood - here we have buffers of native woodland. However, the site at Hoarthorns Farm lies adjacent to a designated Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), which will include areas undergoing natural colonisation. While natural colonisation is not part of the woodland creation strategy next to Hoarthorns Wood, the design incorporates buffer zones that allow for the development of natural species, supporting ecological connectivity with the wider landscape.

12.4 Include a 10-metre buffer between sites where a significant degree of soil has occurred to reduce risk of sediment pollution

10-metre buffer zones have been incorporated into the project design. The proposed activities will result in minimal soil disturbance so the likelihood of sediment pollution is likely to be negligible.

12.5 Plant site split over a number of years to increase the diversity in age classes

The site borders the Forest of Dean so already benefits from age diversity. The proposed woodland creation will further enhance this diversity across the landscape. Planting is planned for winter 2025/26 to meet government targets.

13. Woodland Maintenance

13.1 How will the woodland edges, open areas and rides be managed sustainably in the long term?

Ongoing maintenance is planned to make sure the new woodland is established successfully. This is especially important during the first few years and will include management of competing vegetation where needed and maintenance of deer fences. Open spaces, rides and woodland edges will be maintained through a combination of mowing and grazing. Once the trees are fully established longer term management for sustainable timber production will be scheduled and consulted on in a Forest Management Plan.

13.2 Who will graze the middle section of the site?

We are currently reviewing who will work with Forestry England to graze the open land in the centre of the site. We expect this area to be looked after using a mix of cattle grazing and machinery to make hay. This will help care for the land in a sustainable way and support local wildlife.

Appendix A: Our response to key themes from early engagement

A new woodland at Hoarthorns - our response to key themes from early engagement

We invited local people to share their initial views about our plans to create a new woodland on land at Hoarthorns Farm in the Forest of Dean. Here are our responses to the key themes and questions people raised.

Users of the new woodland and public access

The new woodland at Hoarthorns will be open to the public and provide a quiet space for local people to enjoy. Once we have finished creating the woodland we will dedicate it under the Countryside and Rights of Way Act so people can explore the site.

Pedestrians will be able to visit the new woodland via the network of existing public rights of way, including the Wysis Way, a 55-mile public footpath that crosses distinctive areas of the Forest of Dean, Severn Vale and the Cotswolds. These paths, a network of new unsurfaced grass routes and new or upgraded operational forest tracks will give access for woodland maintenance and for people to explore the new woodland. There are no plans to include new surfaced trails, cycling or horse riding specific infrastructure.

Visitors will be welcome to walk their dogs in the new woodland, but we have no plans to fence around the whole woodland or include waste bins. We expect all dog owners to be responsible and to keep their pets under control in all the forests and woodland we care for following our forest [dog code1](#).

Forestry England works with many community groups that help manage our woodlands. Volunteers are critical in the work we do, and we can achieve a lot more with their help. There may be opportunities to get involved with a community planting day when we begin planting the new woodland for local people to join in creating this special place.

Parking and traffic

The woodland will be open to the public and can be easily visited on foot on the existing public footpaths and forest tracks from the surrounding area. We have no plans to include visitor or other recreational facilities and therefore our proposal does not include additional public parking. We want to avoid a significant increase to car traffic on local roads. To manage the new woodland, we will need road access for our forestry vehicles, and we plan to use existing entrances off the A4136. We will upgrade and create new forest tracks within the woodland and will consider barriers to discourage unauthorised access and antisocial behaviour.

Design, landscape and views

The new mixed woodland will improve the landscape by increasing biodiversity and enhancing the natural environment. We have done surveys to tell us more about the plants, wildlife and archaeology at Hoarthorns. These surveys, along with a landscape and visual appraisal have guided our draft designs. Our design carefully considers the views to and from the site. The woodland has been designed sensitively along existing footpaths, including the Wysis Way, where we have included open space, low density broadleaf planting and native shrubs to provide an attractive walking route. Our proposals include a large area of open space that we propose to manage as meadow habitat for grazing. Areas near powerlines and underground services, will also be kept as open spaces, opening views. These areas will have a natural shape, often with groups of shrubs along their edges to blend in with the surroundings.

To the north and east the proposals include more open space, an area of natural colonisation, wider spaced tree planting, shrubs and broadleaf trees to create an attractive and natural looking edge to the woodland that gently blends into the wider landscape. We have left open spaces where there are heritage features below ground, as recommended by heritage experts. The design includes new grass routes, linking public footpaths and open spaces. Existing hedgerows will be kept, creating diverse habitats for wildlife and connectivity beyond the woodland, and to benefit biodiversity, such as butterflies and birds.

We have carefully considered how close the new woodland will be to our new neighbours and we will leave open space and plant groups of shrubs and trees at wider spacing at the edges of the woodland near neighbouring properties and close to Edge End. Planting native broadleaf trees on the edges of existing woodland and including fruiting trees and areas of wet woodland with ponds, will support a wide range of wildlife, including varied species of birds, mammals, insects and fungi, all of which thrive in the diverse environment created by these trees.

The trees we will plant

We are using years of experience and the latest scientific evidence to plan in detail the trees we will plant at the new woodland. Our surveys help us to choose the trees most suitable for the site now and as the climate changes. Our professional foresters carefully choose what trees to plant and where to plant them. They understand the local soil, how quickly the trees will grow, and the important habitats, species and geographical features nearby. We also consider tree pests and diseases and future climate conditions to keep woods as healthy as possible.

The species chosen will be a mix of broadleaf and conifer, often planted together in mixtures, with groups of shrub species along edges to increase the variety and provide seasonal colour and texture. Species have been chosen to produce a future source of sustainable timber. This supply of homegrown wood products will support the wider British timber and forestry industry, helping to reduce the demand for

imports from other countries. The species at Hoarthorns might include hazel, wild cherry, small leaved lime, pedunculate oak, guelder rose, dogwood, aspen, alder, rowan and willow. Conifers may include Douglas fir, Scots pine and Serbian spruce.

Establishing and managing the new woodland

We aim to plant the new woodland in winter 25/26. Maintenance in the first five years will be especially important to ensure the woodland's long-term success. The woodland will be managed by the Forestry England team and our local contractors. We will develop a Forest Plan to make sure that future timber production is sustainable. As part of our ongoing management of the woodland, we will begin to remove some trees after about 20-25 years -this will provide a sustainable supply of timber and help the woodland to thrive for many years to come. We do not intend to fence the boundary of the new woodland at Hoarthorns, we will use deer fencing to protect larger blocks of new planting and tree tubes in smaller areas. Fencing and tree tubes would be removed and where possible recycled after the trees become established.

Protecting the new woodland from deer and feral wild boar

The Forest of Dean is home to a variety of deer species, these include Fallow, Roe, and Muntjac. It is also home to the largest population of wild boar in the UK. With no natural predators, high levels of reproduction and ideal habitat for food and shelter populations of deer and boar could continue to grow until the population density reaches a level whereby the population starts to self-regulate through limited food resources.

Without intervention and protection browsing can damage young trees, plants and wildlife habitats. In the short-term, this can kill some trees and plant species and in the longer-term, it can reduce the resilience of the new woodland to climate change, reduce plant and animal diversity and lower the carbon captured from the atmosphere.

To keep healthy and sustainable populations Forestry England's management is to step into the absent role of the natural predator through population management control.

Our highly skilled wildlife rangers safely and humanely control deer and boar populations in our woodlands, working to the highest standards whilst undertaking other vital conservation works to protect and increase the numbers of other threatened species. More information about how Forestry England manage deer can be found [here](#).¹ More information about how Forestry England manage wild boar can be found [here](#). Any landowner may choose to protect their land from deer or feral wild boar by maintaining and strengthening their boundaries, the [Deer initiative](#) provides best practice guidance for fencing standards.

Why are you planting agricultural land?

The new woodland will capture carbon, restore and connect habitats, enhance biodiversity, and supply sustainable homegrown timber as well as a wonderful space for people to enjoy. The site has been carefully and individually assessed so it is suitable for woodland creation and sensitive to the local landscape. This assessment considers the existing land use, and we target lower-quality or less productive land to create new woodlands.

Forestry England understands concerns around food security and keeping the best land in agricultural production. Our woodland creation programme seeks to avoid the most productive land (grades 1 & 2). Most of the land at Hoarthorns is graded at 3 with a small section at the centre of the site that is currently used for crops is a [grade 2](#). Our designs will retain this agricultural land with the intention to include grazing. Forestry England's role is to manage and expand the nation's forests to ensure they are healthy and sustainable and benefit wildlife, people and the economy.

Timber is a crucial material for the UK's green economy helping a move away from higher-emission materials like steel, concrete, aluminium and bricks. It is renewable, sustainable, and has a lower carbon footprint, making it essential for environmentally friendly construction and manufacturing practices. Currently the UK imports [over 80% of its timber](#).

Appendix B: Consultation information

Available to view on the consultation website [here](#), or exhibited at the consultation drop in event



Forestry England

Growing the nation's forests

A proposed new woodland at Hoarthorns, Gloucestershire

Forestry England are planting new woodlands to expand the nation's forests

We are working on designs for a new woodland at Hoarthorns, near Edge End, Gloucestershire, approximately 2 miles northeast of Coleford. We would like your comments on our initial proposals. Your feedback will inform our final designs for the woodland.

Working with public and private landowners, we're choosing the right places for woodlands to grow and flourish, carefully planting a mix of tree species to be resilient in our changing climate.

Every new woodland will have public access so you can explore and enjoy them to support your health and wellbeing.

They will be valuable places for wildlife, often linking other woods and hedgerows to provide green corridors for wildlife to move and thrive across the landscape.

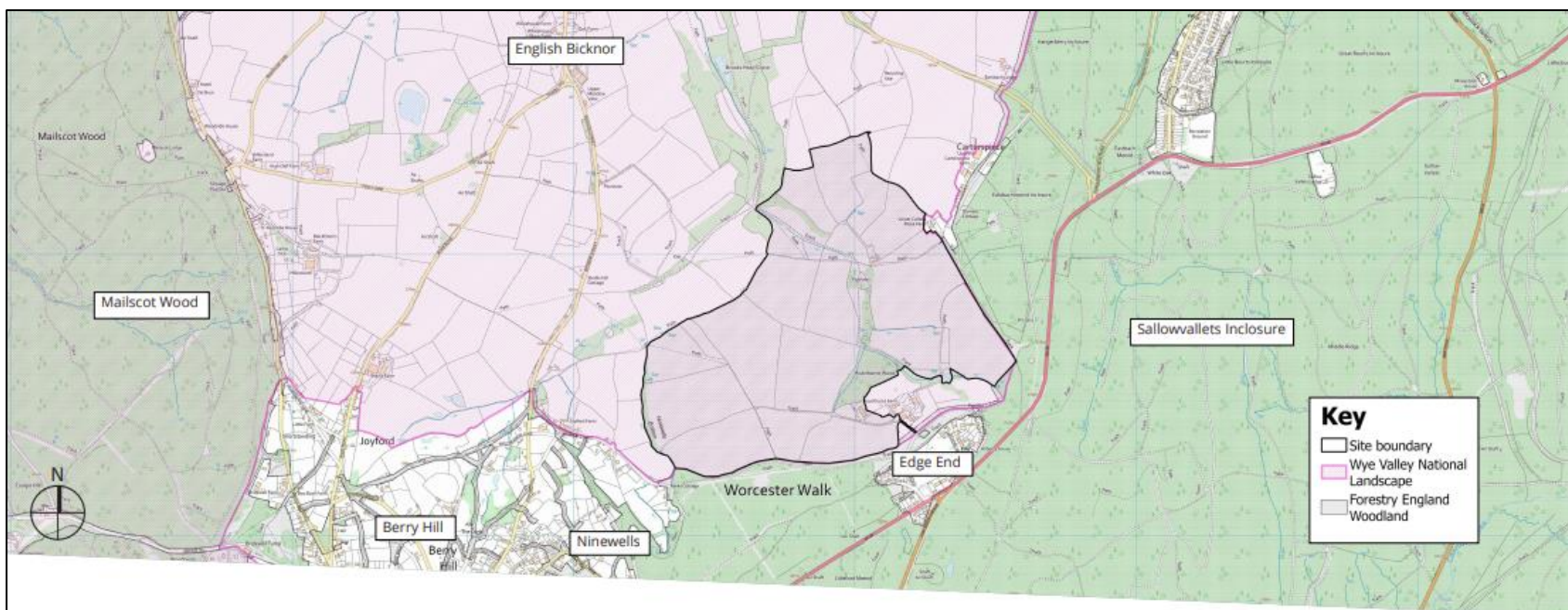
In time, each new woodland will provide sustainable timber, contributing to the rural economy. And they'll have wider environmental benefits including absorbing carbon, improving soil health and air quality, and water management.

Forestry England is creating these woodlands through the Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs' (DEFRA) Nature for Climate Fund.

Scan the QR code to find out more:

forestryengland.uk





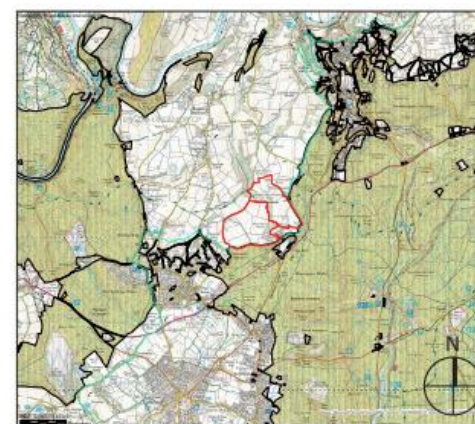
Site location & context

The proposed new woodland is located within the Forest of Dean west of Edge End and north east of Berry Hill with English Bicknor to the north.

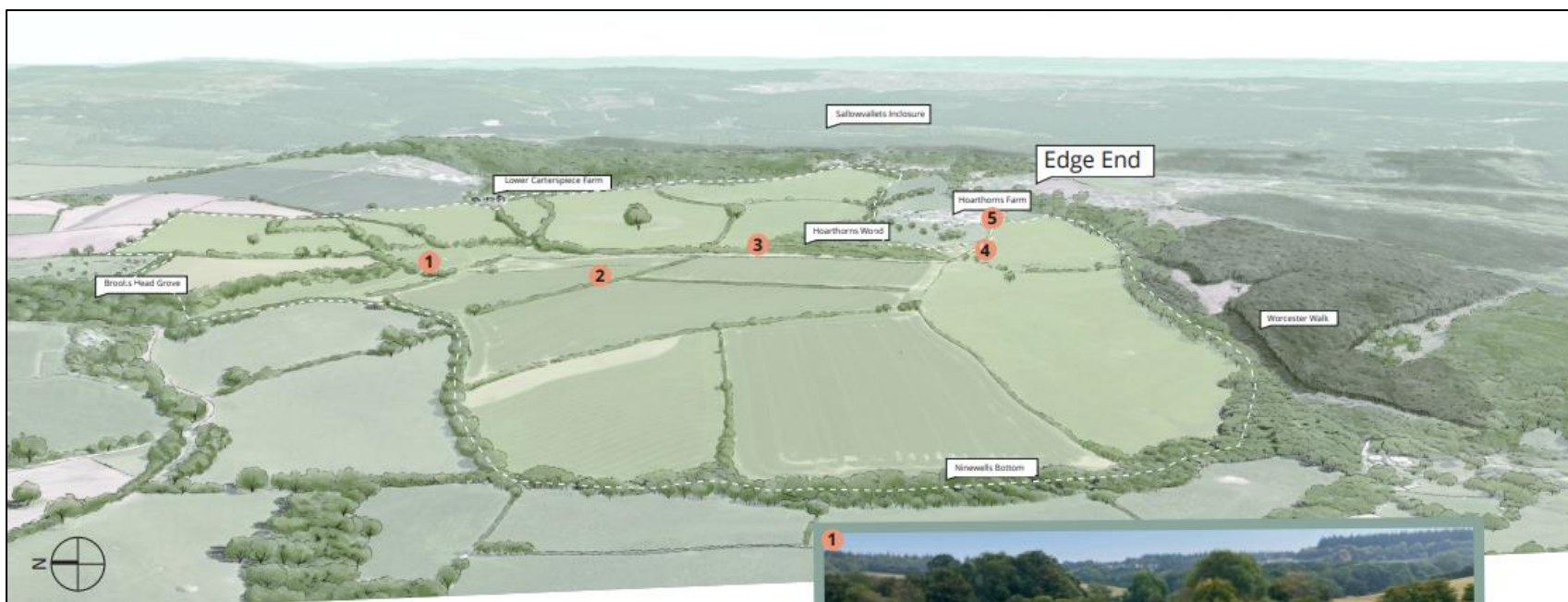
The site is in a largely pastoral landscape surrounded to the south and east by the Forest of Dean and is wholly within the Wye Valley National Landscape.

The site for the new woodland lies within Natural England's National Character Area (NCA) '105 Forest of Dean and Lower Wye', a well wooded, undulating plateau of ridges and valleys sitting over shallow Coal Measures, contained by an outer rim of more open landscape and with the River Wye cutting dramatic gorges with steep, wooded slopes to the west of the site.

The NCA features rich wildlife habitats including grassland, heathland, traditional orchards and woodland; nationally important assemblages of woodland birds and butterflies; internationally important woodland, river and bat sites; and a range of other rare flora and fauna.



Site Location 1:24,000
© Crown copyright and database right (2024) Ordnance Survey (100021242)
© Geomapping Ltd and Blunsky International 2024



The existing site

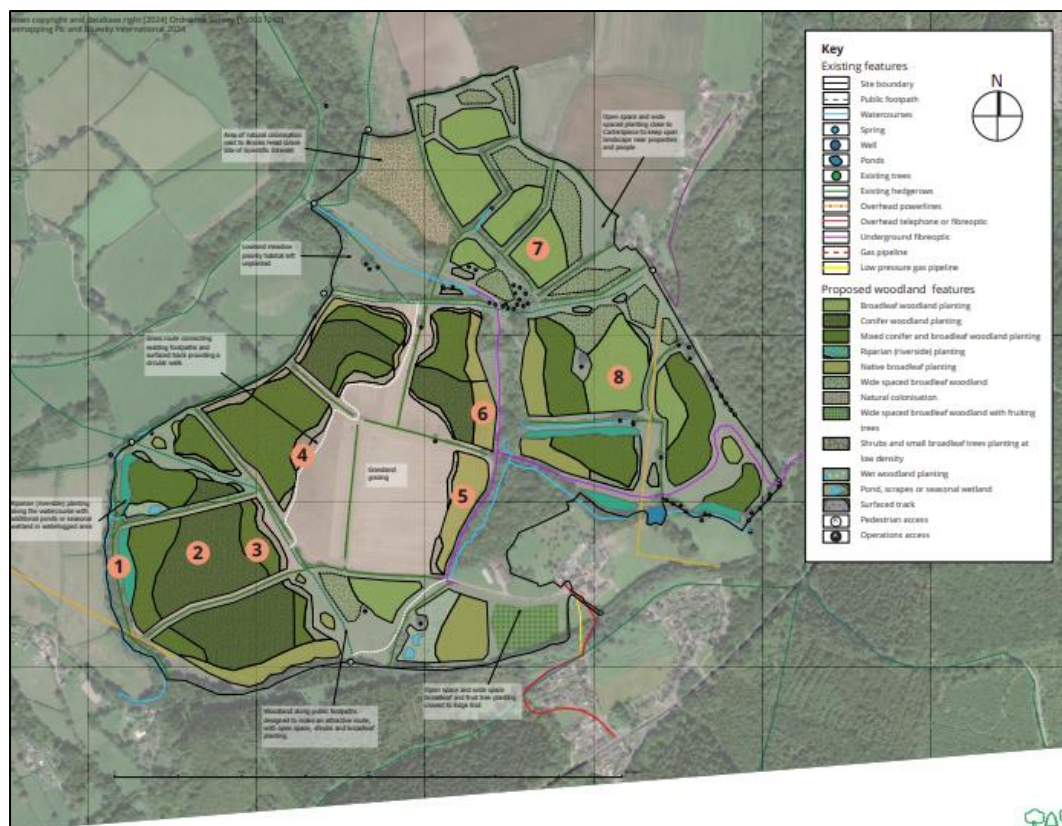
The western and central part of the site is mostly arable land rising from the watercourse to a plateau where there are far reaching views from west to north east. Mature native hedgerows enclose medium to large sized fields. The hedgerows are fragmented in parts. Residential properties and areas of settlement can be seen on all sides

In the east, the site is mostly pastoral stretching along the south boundary eastwards to Edge End then northwards to Carterspiece. This landscape slopes away from the densely wooded parts of the Forest of Dean, and often far reaching views out to the landscape of the Wye Valley can be seen. Mature native hedgerows enclose small to medium sized fields. There are mature parkland trees along the far eastern boundary of this area.

At the centre of the site is a narrow valley grazed by farm animals. Its wooded boundaries create a strong sense of enclosure and a strong sense of place, often framing views to the landscape beyond.

Photos: 1. View south east towards Edge End from within the valley. 2. View north west from the plateau. 3. View north from Hoarthorns Wood. 4. View south into waterlogged field. 5. View west along Hoarthorns Farm track.





Tree species we could plant



Draft design

How we design new woodland

We are designing the new woodland to benefit people, the economy, wildlife and the wider landscape. Our design meets the UK Forestry Standard, which takes into account the following elements (Forestry Commission, 2021):

Detailed desktop surveys, site surveys and analysis will inform our design. This includes:

- Preliminary ecological appraisal
- Historic environment records
- Geophysical surveys
- Landscape and visual appraisal
- Local environment records
- Soil mapping
- Ecological site classification
- Utilities searches
- Responses to initial consultation



Objectives for the new woodland



Create a mixed resilient woodland: plant a mix of trees to create species and structural diversity and to produce a lasting supply of certified sustainable timber.



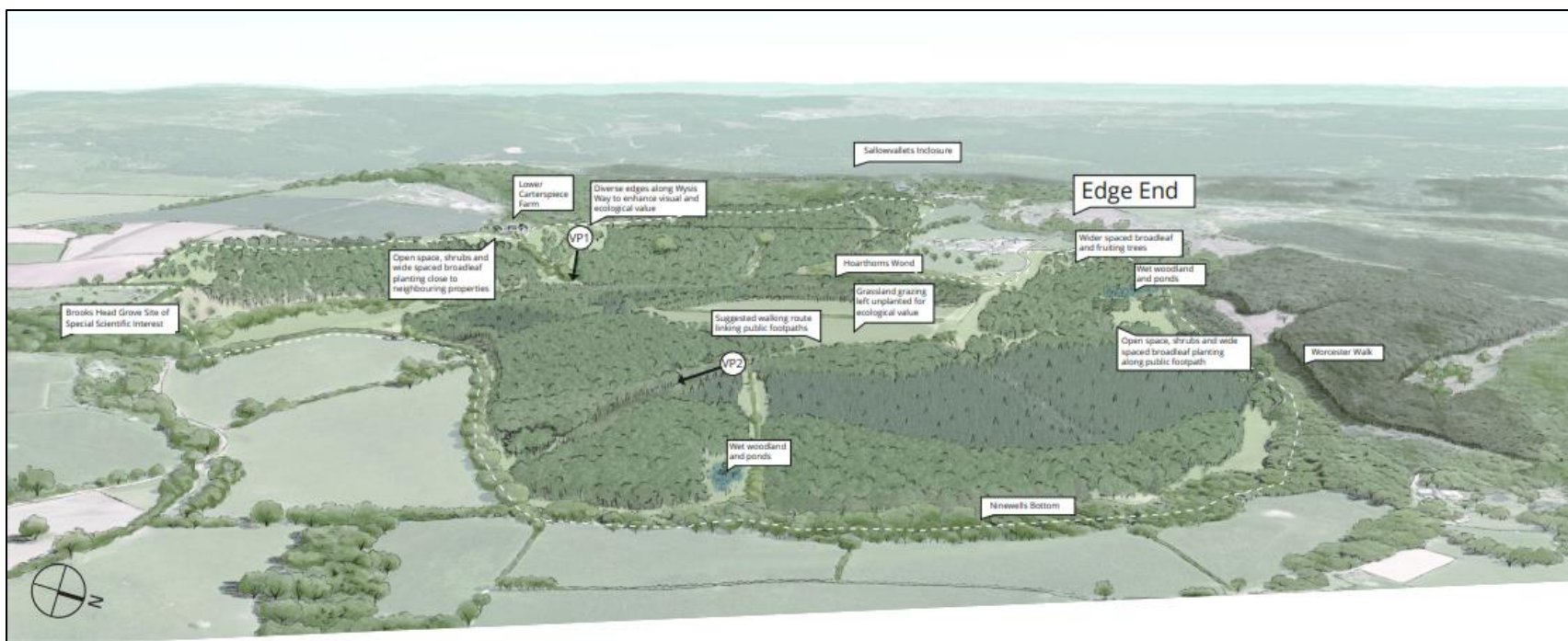
Improve woodland connectivity and enhance existing ancient woodland: link adjacent ancient woodlands to improve habitat connectivity. Preserve hedges and create open spaces and areas to regrow naturally (natural regeneration) within the woodland for wildlife to thrive.



Sequester atmospheric carbon: help meet government net zero emissions goals by planting and managing woodland that will thrive in future climates and store carbon.



Public access for health and wellbeing: provide low-key recreation opportunities by improving access to the countryside for local residents and visitors.



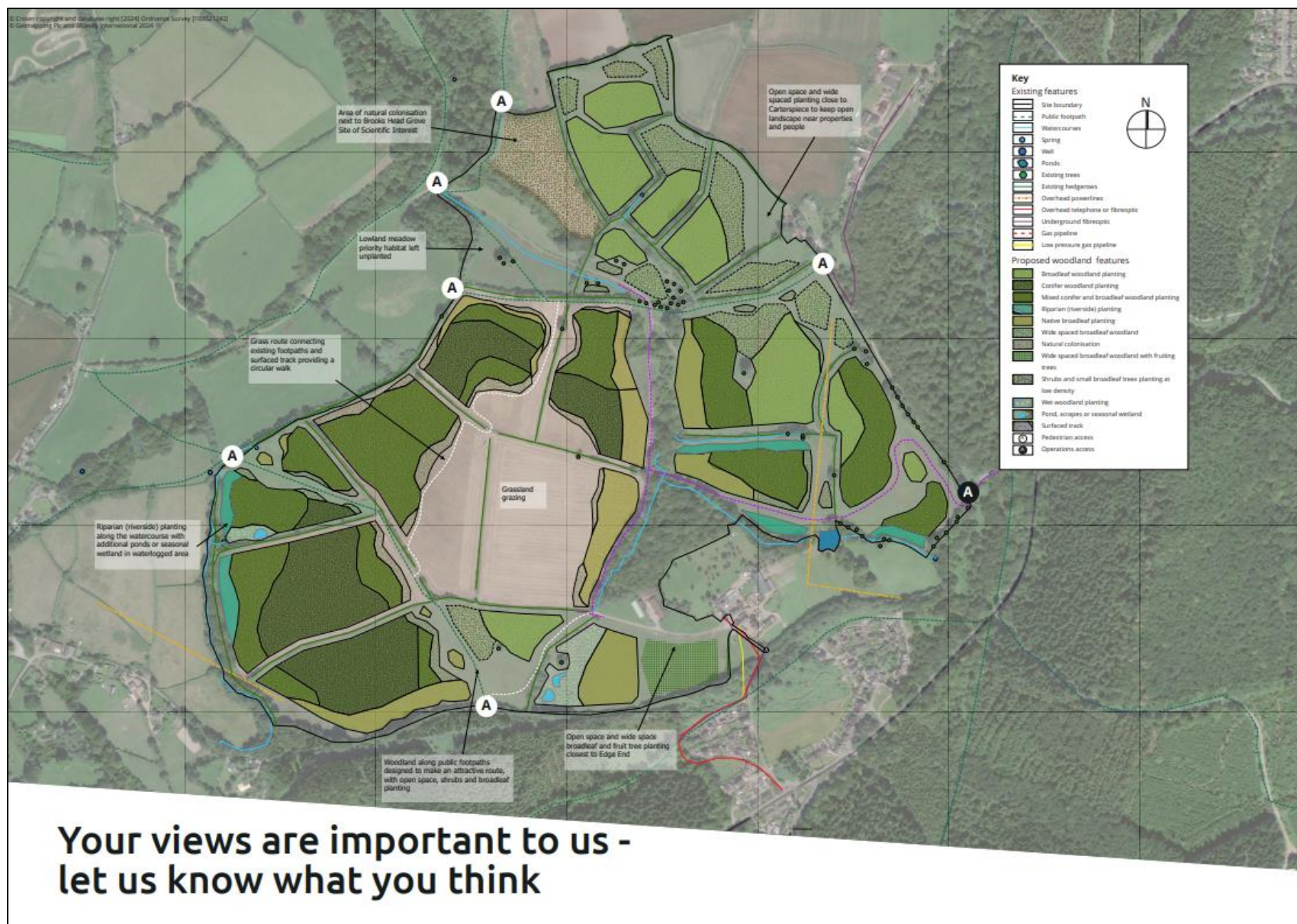
How the new woodland could look

Our initial designs include proposals to:

- Add visual diversity in the landscape by planting a mix of conifer, broadleaf and conifer/broadleaf mixes as well as native trees and shrub mixes.
- Protect the Site of Special Scientific Interest and ancient semi-natural woodland with open areas for natural regeneration and native broadleaf buffers.
- Use the new woodland to frame views of the surrounding landscape and make the walk along the Wysis Way and public footpaths more enjoyable
- Keep the views from properties at Carterspiece and Edge End by leaving open spaces near property boundaries and planting shrubs and trees more sparsely.
- Add wet woodland planting, ponds, fruiting trees and riverside (riparian) planting to create a woodland that is visually appealing and ecologically diverse.
- Create open corridors by leaving space around hedgerows, streams, ditches, powerlines and pipelines. Plant shrubs in key areas along these open spaces at the edges of the woodland to benefit wildlife.

Artist's impressions:







Forestry England

A new woodland at Hoarthorns - our response to key themes from early engagement

We invited local people to share their initial views about our plans to create a new woodland on land at Hoarthorns Farm in the Forest of Dean. Here are our responses to the key themes and questions people raised.

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Visitors will be welcome to walk their dogs in the new woodland, but we have no plans to fence around the whole woodland or include waste bins. We expect all dog owners to be responsible and to keep their pets under control in all the forests and woodland we care for following our forest dog code¹.

Forestry England works with many community groups that help manage our woodlands. Volunteers are critical in the work we do, and we can achieve a lot more with their help. There may be opportunities to get involved with a community planting day when we begin planting the new woodland for local people to join in creating this special place.

Parking and traffic

The woodland will be open to the public and can be easily visited on foot on the existing public footpaths and forest tracks from the surrounding area. We have no plans to include visitor or other recreational facilities and therefore our proposal does not include additional public parking. We want to avoid a significant increase to car traffic on local roads. To manage the new woodland, we will need road access for our forestry vehicles, and we plan to use existing entrances off the A4136. We will upgrade and create new forest tracks within the woodland and will consider barriers to discourage unauthorised access and antisocial behaviour.

Design, landscape and views

The new mixed woodland will improve the landscape by increasing biodiversity and enhancing the natural environment. We have done surveys to tell us more about the plants, wildlife and archaeology at Hoarthorns. These surveys, along with a landscape and visual appraisal have guided our draft designs.

Our design carefully considers the views to and from the site. The woodland has been

designed sensitively along existing footpaths, including the Wysis Way, where we have included open space, low density broadleaf planting and native shrubs to provide an attractive walking route. Our proposals include a large area of open space that we propose to manage as meadow habitat for grazing. Areas near powerlines and underground services, will also be kept as open spaces, opening views. These areas will have a natural shape, often with groups of shrubs along their edges to blend in with the surroundings.

To the north and east the proposals include more open space, an area of natural colonisation, wider spaced tree planting, shrubs and broadleaf trees to create an attractive and natural looking edge to the woodland that gently blends into the wider landscape. We have left open spaces where there are heritage features below ground, as recommended by heritage experts. The design includes new grass routes, linking public footpaths and open spaces. Existing hedgerows will be kept, creating diverse habitats for wildlife and connectivity beyond the woodland, and to benefit biodiversity, such as butterflies and birds.

We have carefully considered how close the new woodland will be to our new neighbours and we will leave open space and plant groups of shrubs and trees at wider spacing at the edges of the woodland near neighbouring properties and close to Edge End. Planting native broadleaf trees on the edges of existing woodland, and including fruiting trees and areas of wet woodland with ponds, will support a wide range of wildlife, including varied species of birds, mammals, insects and fungi, all of which thrive in the diverse environment created by these trees.

The trees we will plant

We are using years of experience and the latest scientific evidence to plan in detail the trees we will plant at the new woodland. Our surveys help us to choose the trees most suitable for the site now and as the climate changes. Our professional foresters carefully choose what trees to plant and where to plant them. They understand the local soil, how quickly the trees will grow, and the important habitats, species and geographical features nearby. We also consider tree pests and diseases and future climate conditions to keep woods as healthy as possible.

The species chosen will be a mix of broadleaf and conifer, often planted together in mixtures, with groups of shrub species along edges to increase the variety and provide seasonal colour and texture. Species have been chosen to produce a future source of sustainable timber. This supply of homegrown wood products will support the wider British timber and forestry industry, helping to reduce the demand for imports from other countries.

The species at Hoarthorns might include hazel, wild cherry, small leaved lime, pedunculate oak, guelder rose, dogwood, aspen, alder, rowan and willow. Conifers

may include Douglas fir, Scots pine and Serbian spruce. The existing hedgerows will be preserved and we will also include an area of fruiting trees.

Establishing and managing the new woodland

We aim to plant the new woodland in winter 25/26. Maintenance in the first five years will be especially important to ensure the woodland's long-term success. The woodland will be managed by the Forestry England team and our local contractors.

We will develop a Forest Plan to make sure that future timber production is sustainable. As part of our ongoing management of the woodland, we will begin to remove some trees after about 20-25 years - this will provide a sustainable supply of timber and help the woodland to thrive for many years to come.

We do not intend to fence the boundary of the new woodland at Hoarthorns, we will use deer fencing to protect larger blocks of new planting and tree tubes in smaller areas. Fencing and tree tubes would be removed and where possible recycled after the trees become established.

Scan the QR code
to find out more:

forestryengland.uk





Forestry England

A new woodland at Hoarthorns - our response to key themes from early engagement

We invited local people to share their initial views about our plans to create a new woodland on land at Hoarthorns Farm in the Forest of Dean. Here are our responses to the key themes and questions people raised.

Protecting the new woodland from deer and feral wild boar

The Forest of Dean is home to a variety of deer species, these include Fallow, Roe, and Muntjac. It is also home to the largest population of wild boar in the UK. With no natural predators, high levels of reproduction and ideal habitat for food and shelter populations of deer and boar could continue to grow until the population density reaches a level whereby the population starts to self-regulate through limited food resources.

Without intervention and protection browsing can damage young trees, plants and wildlife habitats. In the short-term, this can kill some trees and plant species and in the longer-term, it can reduce the resilience of the new woodland to climate change, reduce plant and animal diversity and lower the carbon captured from the atmosphere.

To keep healthy and sustainable populations Forestry England's management is to step into the absent role of the natural predator through population management control.

Our highly skilled wildlife rangers safely and humanely control deer and boar populations in our woodlands, working to the highest standards whilst undertaking other vital conservation works to protect and increase the numbers of other threatened species. More information about how Forestry England manage deer can be found [here](#).¹ More information about how Forestry England manage wild boar can be found [here](#).²

Any landowner may choose to protect their land from deer or feral wild boar by maintaining and strengthening their boundaries, the Deer initiative provides best practice guidance for fencing standards.

Why are you planting agricultural land?

The new woodland will capture carbon, restore and connect habitats, enhance biodiversity, and supply sustainable homegrown timber as well as a wonderful space for people to enjoy.

The site has been carefully and individually assessed so it is suitable for woodland creation and sensitive to the local landscape. This assessment considers the existing land use, and we target lower-quality or less productive land to create new woodlands.

Forestry England understands concerns around food security and keeping the best land in agricultural production. Our woodland creation programme seeks to avoid the most productive land (grades 1 & 2). Most of the land at Hoarthorns is graded at 3 with a small section at the centre of the site that is currently used for crops is a grade 2. Our

designs will retain this agricultural land with the intention to include grazing. Forestry England's role is to manage and expand the nation's forests to ensure they are healthy and sustainable and benefit wildlife, people and the economy.

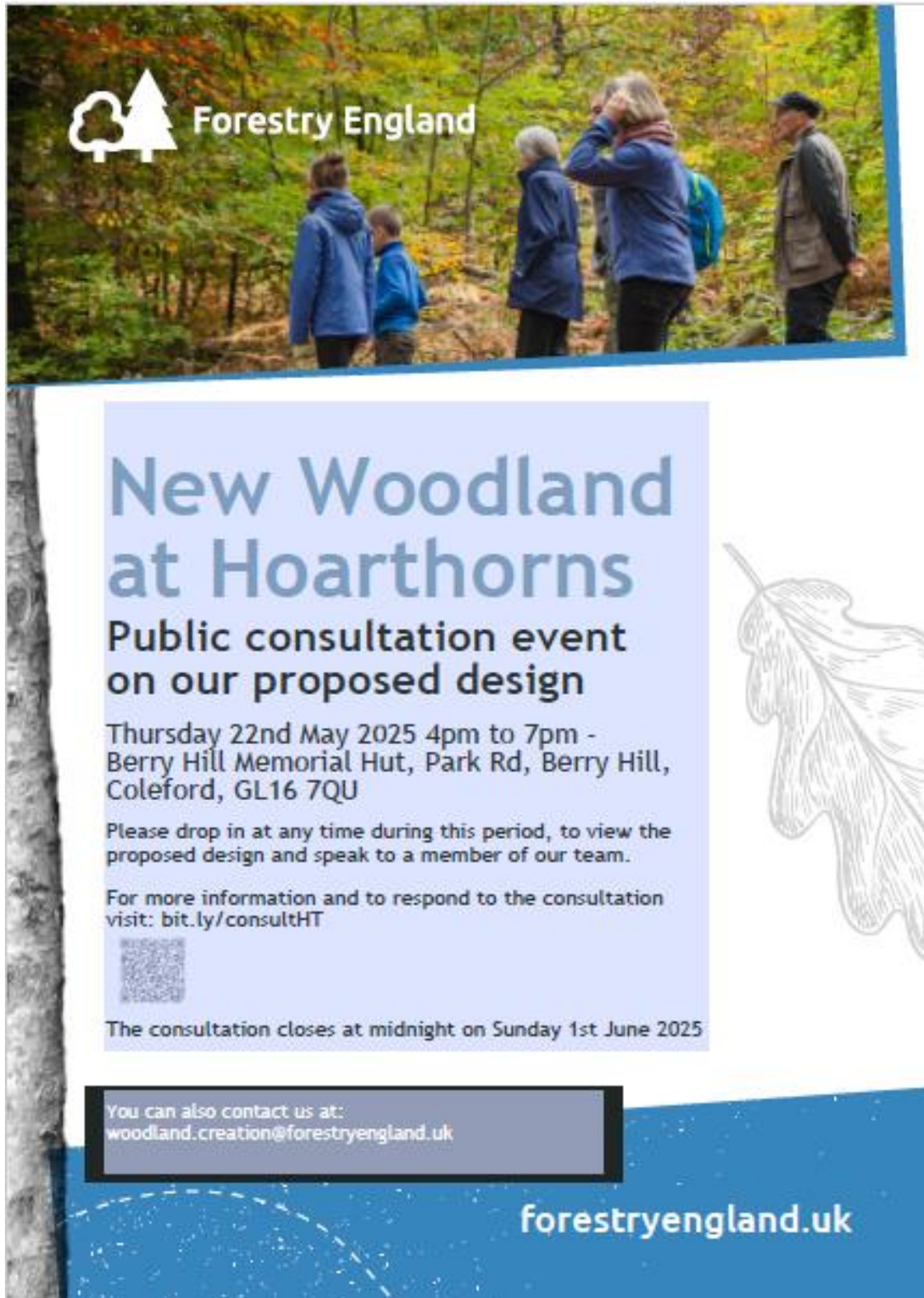
Timber is a crucial material for the UK's green economy helping a move away from higher-emission materials like steel, concrete, aluminium and bricks. It is renewable, sustainable, and has a lower carbon footprint, making it essential for environmentally friendly construction and manufacturing practices. Currently the UK imports over 80% of its [timber](#).³


Scan the QR code
to find out more:

forestryengland.uk



Event poster



 **Forestry England**


**New Woodland
at Hoarthorns**

**Public consultation event
on our proposed design**

Thursday 22nd May 2025 4pm to 7pm -
Berry Hill Memorial Hut, Park Rd, Berry Hill,
Coleford, GL16 7QU

Please drop in at any time during this period, to view the
proposed design and speak to a member of our team.

For more information and to respond to the consultation
visit: bit.ly/consultHT




The consultation closes at midnight on Sunday 1st June 2025

You can also contact us at:
woodland.creation@forestryengland.uk


forestryengland.uk

Forestry England Website


<https://www.forestryengland.uk/article/new-woodland-hoarthorns-farm>




Visit ▾ Things to do ▾ Forestry and wildlife ▾ Support us ▾ Membership ▾ About us ▾ [Donate](#)



New woodland at Hoarthorns Farm



Growing the nation's forests



Here at Forestry England we're pleased to have the opportunity to expertly create a new woodland on land at Hoarthorns Farm, next to our existing woodlands at Ninewells, Berry Hill near Coleford in the Forest of Dean.

Once planted, the new 88 hectare woodland will be one of the most significant extensions to woodland in the Forest of Dean in over 200 years. The woodland at Hoarthorns Farm will become a valuable habitat for wildlife, produce sustainable timber for a greener economy and be a new space for people to explore and enjoy.

This new woodland is one of many we're creating around the country to grow the nation's forests, supporting Government targets for increasing tree planting across the UK.

Hoarthorns public consultation

Our draft design proposals for the new woodland are now complete and we invite your comments on them. You can comment online until Sunday 1 June via the button below.

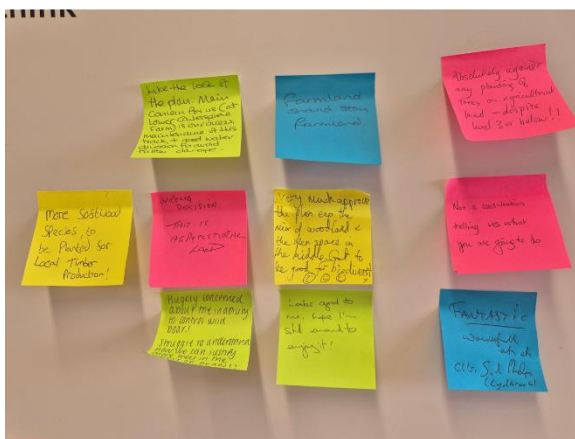
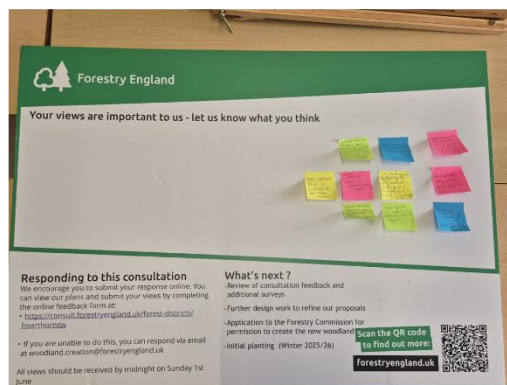
We'll also be holding a public drop-in event in May - details can be found on the consultation page too.

Public feedback and surveys will inform our detailed plans for the new woodland. Our aim is to create the new woodland over the next couple of years with initial planting beginning in winter 2025/26.

We will post key updates on this webpage as the project progresses.

[View the plans](#)

Consultation event images



Appendix C : Consultation questionnaire



A proposed new woodland at Hoarthorns

Overview

Forestry England would like to share with you our proposed plans for the new woodland at Hoarthorns.

Why your views matter

Your feedback, as well as site surveys, has helped shape proposals showing how the new woodland could look. Forestry England value your comments and feedback on the proposal and welcome you to our consultation event.

Introduction

Thank you for taking part in this consultation on the design proposals for the new woodland.

You can submit information without completing the name and email details, but if you choose to do so they will be held by Forestry England as per our privacy policy [Privacy Policy | Forestry England](https://www.forestryengland.uk/privacy) (<https://www.forestryengland.uk/privacy>)

1. What is your name?

2. What is your address?

3. What is your postcode?

4. Are you responding as:

- ☐ A local resident
- ☐ A local business
- ☐ A elected official
- ☐ Other stakeholder: Please name below

5. If you're responding on behalf of an organisation, what is the name of your organisation?

6. What is your e-mail address?

7. Would you like to be notified about future consultation on these new woodland proposals?

☐
☐

Yes (please make sure you have provided your e-mail address above)

No

Feedback

8. Please use this space to add feedback or questions on the proposed plans

☐

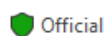
Appendix D: Examples of letters/emails announcing the launch of consultation - neighbours and parish councils

Public consultation on draft design proposals for a new woodland at Hoarthorns



Woodland Creation <woodland.creation@forestryengland.uk>

To ○ Woodland Creation



06/05/2025

Dear neighbour

Public consultation on draft design proposals for a new woodland at Hoarthorns

Thank you for your interest in our proposed new woodland on land at Hoarthorns, Edge End, near Coleford in the Forest of Dean.

We are now contacting you about the launch of a public consultation on our draft design proposals for the new woodlands.

These are available to view and comment upon until midnight on Sunday the 1st June: <https://consult.forestryengland.uk/forest-districts/hoarthornsw>

While we continue with our detailed planning for the woodland, we are keen to hear your views on our initial design proposals. These have been informed by site surveys as well as the valuable insights gained from you and other local people earlier this year.

The new woodland will be a valuable place for timber production, wildlife, and people. It will have public access so you will be able to explore and enjoy it to support your health and wellbeing.

Public drop-in event

As part of the consultation, we will also be holding a drop-in event where you can view our proposed designs and talk to members of the Woodland Creation project team:

Date: Thursday 22nd May 2025 **Time:** 4pm - 7pm **Place:** Berry Hill Memorial Hut, Park Road, Berry Hill, Coleford, GL16 7QU

The new woodlands will be one of many that Forestry England is planting to increase tree planting across the UK.

Please feel free to share this email with anyone else who might be interested.

Kind regards

[New woodland at Hoarthorns Farm | Forestry England](#)

Responding to the consultation

The consultation will be open from Tuesday 6th May until midnight on Sunday 1 June

Online: We encourage you submit your response online.

You can view our plans and submit your views here : <https://consult.forestryengland.uk/forest-districts/hoarthornsw>

If you are unable to do this, you can respond via email, typing 'Hoarthorns consultation response' in the header of your email and including your name, address, and postcode in your response.

Next steps

The consultation will close on Sunday 1st June. All responses will be summarised and included in a consultation report along with our response to the key issues raised and published on our website. Consultation feedback and further surveys will help shape the final design proposal we will submit to the Forestry Commission for regulatory review ahead of planting the new woodland.

The Woodland Creation Team
Forestry England

Email: woodland.creation@forestryengland.uk
www.forestryengland.uk



Forestry England

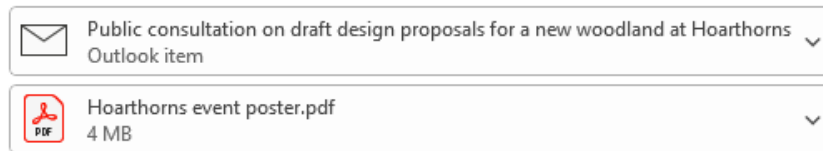
Public consultation on draft design proposals for a new woodland at Hoarthorns



Woodland Creation
To clerk@westdeanpc.org.uk



06/05/2025



Dear West Dean Parish Council

Public consultation on draft design proposals for a new woodland at Hoarthorns

We recently contacted you about our early engagement on plans for a new woodland at Hoarthorns.

I am now writing to let you know that today we have launched the public consultation on our draft design proposals for the new woodland.

These are available to view and comment upon until midnight on Sunday the 1st June: <https://consult.eforestryengland.uk/forest-districts/hoarthornsw>

While we continue with our detailed planning for the woodland, we are keen to hear your views on our initial design proposals. These have been informed by site surveys as well as the valuable insights gained from you and other local people earlier this year.

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Date: Thursday 22nd May 2025 **Time:** 4pm - 7pm **Place:** Berry Hill Memorial Hut, Park Road, Berry Hill, Coleford, GL16 7QU

I attach a PDF copy of a poster promoting the consultation and drop-in events and would be grateful if you could include this on your website or notice boards where available. I have also forwarded a copy of the email we have sent to those that responded to our early engagement and who indicated they would like to receive updates as we progress with our plans for the new woodland.

Whilst we are encouraging all responses to be submitted online (please see attached), should any of your parishioners be unable to access a computer, or attend the event, responses can also be submitted by post at the address below:

Woodland Creation team - Forestry England
620 Bristol Business Park
Coldharbour Lane
Bristol
BS16 1EJ

Kind regards

Brigid

The Woodland Creation Team
Forestry England

Email: woodland.creation@forestryengland.uk
www.forestryengland.uk



Appendix E: Code frame

Theme	Concern	Question	Comment/suggestion
Archaeology and historic landscape			
Avoid locating tracks along the line of linear earthworks (these could be former field boundaries or Lytchets) (HER 33256) or potential hollows and mounds (HER 33261)	0	0	2
Avoid planting within 10 metres of possible scowles (iron extraction quarry); mounds and hollows recorded from Lidar data (HERs 25036 and 25797, HER 33261))	0	0	2
Concern about aspects of the historic landscape at Joyford and Hoarthorns Farm Area at the head of Eastbach Valley and assurances that any planning activity will comply with the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000, clauses 82, 83, and 85;	1	0	0
Discuss planting proposals close to Hoarthorns Farmhouse (Grade 11 listed) with the Conservation Officer at the Forest of Dean District Council	0	0	1
Object to planting on one of the few natural open areas	0	0	1
Object to this proposal - already enough woodland in the area; focus should be on protecting and managing the existing woodland	7	0	0
Presence of earthworks of lynchets (HER6255) possibly associated with a deserted medieval settlement to the north of Eastbach Court - avoid locating tracks along the lines of these features to avoid potential damage during future forestry operations	0	0	2
Respect the archaeology of the area during preparation and planting works. research shows a presence of medieval archaeological findings, origin of place and river names, and links to ancient tribal communities that occupied the areas from the River Wye to the River Cherwell	0	0	1
Retain the existing landscape as ancient farmland	0	0	1
Take the Grade 11 listed farmhouse into consideration when developing plans	3	0	1
The area is the possible location of a high status Roman building or temple	0	0	1
The name Ninewells refers to locations where certain types of Christian Ritual activity previously occurred	0	0	1

The site is on ancient farmland - the new woodland will destroy a historical site	4	0	0
What are the identified underground heritage features	0	1	0
Woodland is within the Wye Valley National landscape and the site should be preserved and left without tree cover	3	0	0
Biking in the woodland	1	1	6
Concern about dirt bikes at old picnic area	1	0	0
Confirmation that mountain biking will not be permitted within the new woodland	0	0	1
Include a forest gravel track from Ninewells bottom to Eastbach end	0	0	1
Include a forest gravel track to link the High meadow area to the main block of forest	0	0	1
Include bike trails	0	0	1
Pleased no specific cycling facilities provided	0	0	1
Pleased that no cycling trails planned	0	0	1
Will mountain and off-road biking be allowed?	0	1	0
Car parking, traffic and access			
Concern about inappropriate parking on access track from the A4136	1	0	0
Include car parking at the farm	0	0	1
Increase in footfall along the access track from the A4136	1	0	0
Please no car parking provided	0	0	1
Provide better access along the track for emergency vehicles	0	0	1
Use of access track by forestry vehicles and inclusion of passing spaces	0	0	1
What route will be used for harvesting vehicles	0	1	0
What will happen to the small FE carpark near Caters piece Farm	0	1	0
Include parking	0	1	0
Will there be an increase in traffic to the access track from the A4136 and will this be improved?	0	1	0
Will there be signage at the entrance to the access track off the A4136?	0	1	0
Carbon and recycling			
Provide more info about Forestry England's fleet vehicle emissions standards along with the types of materials used in tree planting and maintenance	0	0	1
What are tree guards made of? If plastic, are they collected when the trees are suitably mature, are they recycled, will they be logged	0	1	0

with Citizen Science's "Spot the Plastic" programme			
Communication			
Embed content on Citizenspace - PDFs difficult to navigate	0	0	1
Is there a notice or sign to identify the Veteran Machen Oak as a veteran tree?	0	1	0
Flooding and water			
Concern that flood/rainwater from the road and Edge End will be diverted and impact neighbouring property	1	0	0
The land is downstream of any properties at risk of flooding and with recorded property flood risk. Providing channels do not block up, officers don't see a problem and have no further			
Hedgerows			
Protect all hedgerows on the site and comply with the Hedgerow regulations 1997	0	0	1
Hedgerows are not marked on the plans as 'ancient' and being of protected importance. Will contractors be aware that a 6m protection strip should be provided either side of the field boundaries to protect hedgerows?	0	1	0
Maintain and enhance existing bat flightlines. The Upper Wye Gorge SSSI is designated for lesser horseshoe bats - engage with neighbouring landowners to build up resilient hedgerows to create flightlines with	0	0	1
Maintenance of hedges and trees to prevent track obstruction (some trees at dangerous angle - concern about public safety)	1	0	0
Will the hedgerows be maintained long term? (understood they should be re-laid periodically to keep their density)	0	1	0
Overarching positive response			
General positive	0	0	23
Paths and access			
Public Rights of Way should be maintained and kept free of any tree planting (and other barriers to that effect), to ensure access is maintained for the public.	0	0	1

Where public footpaths on the site are unenclosed then they should be two metres wide. Where there are trees/hedgerows/fences to one side, footpaths should be two and a half metres wide. Where there are trees/hedgerows/fences on both sides, footpaths should be three metres wide. (footpaths on the site include English Bicknor 24 / REB24, REB25, REB27, West Dean 2 / RWD2 and the Wysis Way)	0	0	1
Where will the public access be from?	0	1	0
Strategy and regulations			
Assurance that all planting will be compliant with the relevant legislation to protect historic and nationally important landscapes and areas of SSI.	0	0	1
If cremation sites are unearthed, legislation (The Burial Act 1857) requires a licence for the disturbance of human remains from the Home Office.	0	0	1
Proposals meet a number of Wye Valley National Landscape Biodiversity, Landscape, Special Qualities, Historic Environment, Woodland Trees and Forestry aims and Protected Landscape targets	0	0	1
Scenario A of the Gloucester County Council Officer Report (2024) 'Leveraging Natural Capital' in the Forest of Dean's was prepared to inform forthcoming plans and policies of the Wye Valley National Landscape Partnership, the Forest of Dean District Council, and other stakeholders	0	0	1
These proposals offer the possibility for future interventions to create landscape-scale habitat connectivity between the Statutory Forest and the Wye Valley.	0	0	1
These proposals should be considered in conjunction with the draft Gloucestershire Local Nature Recovery Strategy, which is due for public consultation this Autumn	0	0	1
Surveys			
Are there plans to do a baseline NVC survey of the priority grassland and submit a GCER?	0	1	0
Tree species and planting			
Has climate change been factored in when considering tree selection - so that in 100 years trees will still be well suited	0	2	0
Include less conifer planting	0	0	1
Plant some areas with only oak varieties - they are slow growing and can struggle to survive when planted in a mixed plot	0	0	1

What influences the final selection of trees - use of could rather than would be planted	0	1	0
Will ground flora be planted as part of the woodland establishment - plant groups of bluebells, wild garlic etc within broadleaf areas	0	0	2
Will minor species planted included local and national scarce native species suited to the site	0	1	0
Will native species be of local provenance?	0	1	0
Volunteering/education			
Interest in volunteering/tree planting/ include local children, schools and educational opportunities	0	0	3
Wildlife and planting			
Are there any particularly important wildlife species in the area?	0	1	0
Will there be habitat for butterflies	0	1	0
Woodland design			
Consider describing the open spaces as 'wood meadows' - enclosed hay meadows that are able to support both grassland and woodland indicator species	0	0	1
Create/include a pond/wetland	0	0	3
Develop woodland pasture across the whole site and use native grazing animals	0	0	1
Include open areas and areas of scrubby grassland and scattered trees	0	0	2
Include some woodland without public access, to be left purely for nature	0	0	1
What is the Brooks Head Grove SSSI designated for	0	1	0
What will happen to the important caves on the site?	0	1	0
Work with Freshwater Habitats Trust to help deliver the proposed ponds in the new woodland	0	0	1
Would prefer less grassland for grazing and more forest	0	0	1
Woodland maintenance			
How will the new woodland be managed?	0	1	0
How will the woodland edges, open areas and rides be managed sustainably in the long term	0	1	0
Who will graze the middle section of the site?	0	2	0
Will light grazing on priority grassland be maintained to keep this as open space	0	0	1
Woodland planting			
Concern about impact of harvesting work in local area and Comment/suggestion to use historic methods to reduce impact	1	0	1

Include natural colonisation next to Hoarthorns Wood	0	0	1
Views			
If the woodlands are left to grow then it will impact the view - can the existing trees be topped whilst planting the new woodland?	1	0	0

Appendix F: Stakeholders contacted

Statutory stakeholders
Natural England National Landscapes
Elected representatives
Parliamentary MP - Matt Bishop MP Gloucestershire County Ward Councillors - Drybrook and Lydbrook Wards Forest of Dean District Ward Councillor - Berry Hill Ward
Parish Councils
West Dean Parish Council English Bicknor Parish Council
Gloucestershire County Council
Highways contact Planning County Archaeologist Public Rights of Way
Utilities
National Grid Severn Trent
Wildlife and special interest groups
Gloucestershire Wildlife Trust
Local bat workers
Forest of Dean Caving Club
Other
Steward of the Verderers - Forest of Dean