



Forestry England

Lower Lye

Consultation report and our response to issues raised

June 2024



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1. Executive summary

Between 7 May and 28 May 2024, we held a consultation on proposals for the designs of a new woodland at Lower Lye. The new 21 hectare woodland will connect with Bucknell Wood and improve connectivity with Hopton Wood. Both are already managed by Forestry England. The new woodland will have public access and be a valuable place for timber, wildlife and floodplain management.

The design proposals we consulted upon were informed by site surveys and early engagement with statutory stakeholders as well as the local community.

We received 21 responses to the consultation which included 49 comments. Whilst some comments were supportive, others highlighted concerns about our proposals, raised questions or made suggestions.

After carefully considering the responses, we are making the following changes and amendments to our proposals for the new woodland.

- We have changed the species growing in the small northern block near Honeyhole from Scot's pine to oak and this will be planted at wider spacing, to keep views open for longer.
- We have included a small number of spaces for parking at our operational access point on the northern side of the road.
- We will provide an accessible gate at the eastern pedestrian site entrance.

Over the coming weeks, we will be finalising our designs to reflect these changes, ahead of an application to the Forestry Commission for regulatory review before we can begin to create the new woodland.

This report outlines our approach to our consultation and engagement with the local community and other key stakeholders, summarises the key concerns, issues and questions raised, and our response.

2. About the Consultation

2.1 Introduction

Forestry England is creating a new woodland on land we have bought at Lower Lye in Shropshire. The land was previously used for arable and pasture farmland and will provide a thriving woodland which will be planted with a mix of tree and shrub species, including mixed conifer and broadleaf trees, specially selected to be resilient to future climate conditions. The new woodland will be a 'Coronation Wood' to celebrate the Coronation of His Majesty King Charles III. It will connect with Bucknell Wood and improve connectivity with Hopton Wood, which are already managed by Forestry England.

The new woodland will have public access for visitors, providing a high-quality green space for people to explore and enjoy, a valuable wildlife habitat, and a sustainable source of timber for a green 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 to shape and inform our final designs which will be submitted to the Forestry Commission for permission to create the new woodland.

2.2 Purpose

The aims of the consultation were to:

- Provide the public and our stakeholders with sufficient information about our proposals to allow informed responses and suggestions
- Understand the reasons for any issues or concerns raised about our proposals
- Identify 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.

2.3 Early engagement

In January 2024, we wrote to people at over 475 addresses within 2500m of the site, including addresses at Bucknell, Chapel Lawn and Bedstone. The letter invited people's views on the issues important for us to consider as we develop our designs for the creation of a new woodland on land in Lower Lye. We also wrote to Shropshire County Council, the local parish councils and notified other stakeholders we consult with when creating new woodlands including local political representatives, local interest and wildlife groups, and Natural England. The letter included a map showing the boundary of the new site and invited responses via an online survey.

We received over 70 responses, from residents and businesses, and utility stakeholders.

The feedback is summarised in Appendix A, and together with further design and survey work and engagement with stakeholders, this has helped to shape the design proposals we presented in the May 2024 public consultation.

2.3.1 Petition

During the early engagement period we were advised that a petition had been started and signatures collected from local people to support the objection to the conversion of grassland valley into woodland at Lower Lye. The objection, which contained over 150 signatures, was submitted to the Forestry England Woodland Creation team and to the office of King Charles 111.

2.5 How our consultation designs were informed by feedback to early engagement

Feedback to our early engagement included questions and concerns about issues including:

- Public access and use of the new woodland
- Traffic and parking
- Views and neighbouring properties
- Flood prevention and mitigation
- Protecting the new woodland from deer
- Tree planting and choices
- Use of agricultural land for woodland
- Woodland management

Appendix D describes how the designs presented at the public consultation responded to this feedback.

2.6 Public consultation - who we consulted

We invited local people who responded to our initial early engagement survey, as well as representatives from Shropshire County Council and local parish councils.

We also contacted immediate neighbours who lived or worked very close to the new woodland offering to meet with them to discuss the proposals.

Other stakeholders such as local political representatives, local interest and wildlife groups, and Natural England were also contacted.

A list of stakeholders we contacted and those that responded are included Appendix F and Appendix G.

2.7 Dates and duration

The public consultation was open for 3 weeks from 7 May to midnight on the 28 May 2024.

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.

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.

2.9 Methods of responding

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

- Completing the questionnaire included on our website at: [Lower Lye Woodland - Forestry Commission - Citizen Space \(forestryengland.uk\)](https://www.forestryengland.uk/LowerLyeWoodland-CitizenSpace)
- Email at: Woodland.creation@forestryengland.co.uk (where responding via the survey was not possible)
- Leaving comments or suggestions at the public information event held at the Memorial Hall in Bucknell (comments from these events have been summarised separately in **Section 3.4** of this report).
- Completing a paper survey at the public information event

2.10 Overview of consultation responses

We received 21 responses to the consultation. 18 were submitted by completing the consultation online, two by email, and one hard copy response was completed at the consultation drop in event. The responses were coded into 49 separate comments and categorised as either positive, negative/concerns, questions or suggestions.

2.11 Consultation materials and publicity

2.9.1 Consultation materials

We published consultation information about the new woodland on our website. This included:

- An overview of the new woodland creation programme and Government tree planting objectives
- A site appraisal of the existing site - with photographs and maps to give context
- An overview of the surveys undertaken and the 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
- An overview of how feedback received to our early engagement had been incorporated into the designs presented in the consultation
- Information on how to respond to the consultation.
- Comment boards at the consultation information drop in events inviting attendees to use sticky notes to leave comments about the proposals.

2.9.2 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
- **Emails** to around 60 people in the local area
- **Emails** to stakeholders
- **Emails:** to the occupants of immediate neighbouring properties offering a meeting to discuss the proposals

- **Posters:** Posters publicising the consultation were put up in public areas around Lower Lye and Bucknell. We also shared the poster with Bedstone and Bucknell Parish Council and Clun Town Council and Chapel Lawn Parish Council.
- **Consultation drop in event:** We held a public information drop-in event on Tuesday 14th May from 4 - 7pm at Bucknell Memorial Hall, Bucknell, SY7 0AA

The event displayed the information already available to view 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 comment boards, and to respond to the consultation formally via the online survey or, if this was not possible, by completing a paper copy at the event, or by email.

Attendees were asked to leave their contact details if they would like to be kept updated about the proposals. More than 50 people attended the event.

2.9.3 Analysis of consultation responses

Responses received by completing the survey or by email, 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 positive, concerns/negative, and questions or suggestions. Each code reflects a point raised by multiple individuals in a variety of ways. From this it was possible to count how many times respondents had raised the same or similar points.

3. About the responses

We received a total of 21 responses to the consultation. Two responses were received from stakeholders (Appendix H). Comments were analysed into x different codes which were then summarised into nine overarching themes.

<i>Theme</i>	<i>General positive</i>	<i>Concern</i>	<i>Question</i>	<i>Suggestion</i>
<i>Access and footpaths</i>		4		6
<i>Community, education and employment</i>				4
<i>Consultation</i>				1
<i>Fencing and hedgerows</i>				1
<i>Flood mitigation</i>		1		3
<i>General positive comments</i>	11			
<i>Impact on agricultural land and food production</i>		5		
<i>Seedstand</i>			2	
<i>Traffic and parking</i>		1	2	3
<i>Tree species</i>			5	2
<i>Views</i>		2		
<i>Wildlife and birds</i>				2
<i>Woodland design</i>		2		7
<i>Woodland management</i>				2
Sum	11	15	9	30

Comments posted on the comment boards at the drop in event have been summarised separately in **Section 3.4** of this document.

3.1 Positive comments

We received 11 general positive comments. These included mentions of the benefits the new woodland would have on wildlife, nature and the environment, and general positive comments for example ‘I think this is a fabulous idea’; I welcome the development which promises to be a significant environmental improvement; and ‘the new woodland will be a great asset to the local area’.

3.2 Concerns/ negative comments

The negative themes and issues have been summarised in the table below:

Theme	Issue/concern	Mentions
<i>Access and footpaths</i>	<i>Plenty of woods locally for the public to visit/more suitable areas for planting</i>	4
<i>Flood mitigation</i>	<i>Concern that leaky dam illustrated can promote bank erosion and be a barrier to the passage of fish</i>	1
<i>Impact on agricultural land and food production</i>	<i>Loss of agricultural land and impact on food supply</i>	5
<i>Traffic and parking</i>	<i>Increase in traffic on narrow lane and concern about parking at entrance to access lane to neighbouring properties</i>	4
<i>Views</i>	<i>Impact on views</i>	2
<i>Woodland design</i>	<i>Current plan falls short of maximising ecological value at expense of providing an amenity woodland</i>	1
<i>Woodland design</i>	<i>Deciduous blocks on the valley floor will overshadow the wetland</i>	1
Sum	Total mentions	17

3.3 Questions & suggestions

We received 40 questions and suggestions about the proposals. Those most frequently mentioned have been summarised into themes in the table below.

<i>Theme</i>	<i>Questions and suggestions</i>
<i>Access and footpaths</i>	<i>6</i>
<i>Community, education and employment</i>	<i>4</i>
<i>Consultation</i>	<i>1</i>
<i>Fencing and hedgerows</i>	<i>1</i>
<i>Flood mitigation</i>	<i>3</i>
<i>Seed stand</i>	<i>2</i>
<i>Traffic and parking</i>	<i>5</i>
<i>Tree species</i>	<i>7</i>
<i>Wildlife and birds</i>	<i>2</i>
<i>Woodland Design</i>	<i>7</i>
<i>Woodland management</i>	<i>2</i>
<i>Sum</i>	<i>40</i>

Questions and suggestions within each theme included:

Access and footpaths:

- Suggestions for improving access into Bucknell Woods
- Include public access into the new woodland other than from the public lane
- Deter access for motorbikes and bikes - consider kissing gates not just signs
- Alternative suggestions for routing the Heart of Wales footpath and line trail

Community, education and employment

- Encourage residents to participate in planting
- Employ local labour and sell deer to local retailers
- Provide practical and educational opportunities

Consultation:

- Publish the Preliminary Ecological Assessment (PEA)

Fencing and hedgerows

- Provide a dog proof fence to prevent sheep worrying

Flood mitigation

- Quantify the benefits of the new woodland on flood mitigation
- Recommendation for an alternative type of leaky dam

Seed stand

- How long will the seed stand be in the new woodland
- Provide more information about its visual impact

Traffic and parking

- Provide parking
- Include passing spaces on the lane for traffic
- Will additional parking be provided at Bucknell Woods?

Tree species

- More information about specific tree species and the proportion of conifers in the planting
- Suggestions to include specific species such as Black poplar and an alternative to ash

Wildlife and birds

- Suggestion for how to maximise attracting wild birds of prey to the new woodland
- Suggestion for establishing links with close by adder colony

Woodland design:

- Extend the wetland so that it is wider and longer
- Provide more open wood pasture within the riparian section of the woodland
- Include more traditional woodland such as coppice and standards

Woodland management

- Include effective measures to manage the deer population

The code frame summarising the comments received to the consultation are included in **Appendix E**. Our response to the key issues and questions raised are set out in **Section 4** of this document.

3.4 Feedback from the consultation drop in event.

Over 50 people attended the public information drop in events held at Buckell Memorial Hall, Bucknell (4.00pm-7pm), on 14 May.

The event displayed the information already available to view 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. In addition, visitors to the event were invited to leave comments on feedback boards.

The board invited free comments using sticky notes. 20 comments were left on the boards. These can be summarised as:

Comment	Mentions
<i>General positive comments</i>	10
<i>Concerns about the impact on agricultural land</i>	2
<i>Suggestions for footpaths and access to Hopton and Bucknall woods</i>	2
<i>Suggestions to include access for bikers and horses</i>	2
<i>Concerns lane is too narrow and not enough parking provision at the western entrance to prevent blocked access to neighbouring properties</i>	2
<i>Concern about drain not being cleared</i>	1
<i>General negative comment</i>	1

4. Our response 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 in the tables on the following pages (Appendix A).

We have grouped the issues into broad themes for a more readily understood overview of the issues. Positive comments about the proposals have been noted, but for conciseness, these have not been included in the tables.

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

- We have changed the species growing in the small northern block near Honeyhole from Scot's pine to oak and this will be planted at wider spacing, to keep views open for longer.
- We have included a small number of spaces for parking at our operational access point on the northern side of the road.
- We will provide an accessible gate at the eastern pedestrian site entrance.

Appendix A: Our response to key issues raised - Lower Lye

Woodland design		
1	<p>Current plan falls short of maximising ecological value at expense of providing an amenity woodland</p> <p>Design the woodland with a focus on specific species rather than wildlife in general</p>	<p>We have designed the new woodland with multiple objectives in mind - to capture carbon, restore and connect habitats, enhance biodiversity, reduce or prevent the damage caused by floods, and the supply of homegrown timber. All our woodlands are open to the public for local people to enjoy.</p> <p>We recognise the need for high diversity ecological sites to have connections between them to allow species and genes to move between them. The introduction of a mixed broadleaf and riparian woodland at Lower Lye will benefit the biodiversity and wildlife in the local area and support species to manage changes brought about by climate change.</p>
2	What size are the buffer zones between the existing hedges and the start of the new woodland	Buffers around existing hedgerows are a minimum of 4 meters. In most cases, and particularly around better quality hedgerows, the buffer is wider, often more than 10 meters.
3	The south flank of grassland should be left open so it is not at risk of being overshadowed by trees	The Design for the new woodland recognises the wet flush area (wetland areas fed by ground water) near to the southeast corner, which is the more species diverse area. The Forest Research Trial will avoid another wet area towards the northwest corner.
4	Growth of biodiversity depends on maximising the wetland area - extend this so it is wider and longer and not obstructed by tall trees. Scrub trees will help alleviate flooding	Recognised wetland flushes (wetland areas fed by ground water) will not be planted and will offer opportunities to work with local wildlife trusts for enrichment planting along the side of River Redlake . We have included a 20 meter riparian (riverside) buffer and will be planting in line with England Woodland Creation Standards https://www.gov.uk/guidance/landscape-and-woodland-design-for-woodland-creation
5	Deciduous blocks on the valley floor will overshadow the wetland	See above
6	Include more traditional woodland such as coppice and standards	Noted - the inclusion of more traditional woodland is something we may decide to incorporate later.

7	Provide more open wood pasture within the riparian area to mitigate flooding and minimise the impact on the valley landscape	<p>Within the area on the plan marked as riparian/wet woodland there will be open space and lower density planting. 1,100 stems per ha and a standard requirement of 40% open space to create woodland that creates 50% dappled shade at the riverbank. We will also be working with Shropshire Wildlife Trust in relation to Natural Flood Management.</p> <p>To reduce the impact on the landscape and keep the views along the valley from the road and public rights of way, we have left a corridor of open space and shrub planting of at least 20 meters on each side of the road and up to 50 meters in places.</p>
Tree species		
8	Include deciduous trees and black poplar	We include willow and alder in our riparian planting. These species share similar characteristics to black poplar and subject to availability we will include black poplar. They are all fast growing, prefer wet riparian habitats and thrive in floodplains and along riverbanks as well as playing a significant role in stabilising soil and preventing erosion.
9	<p>Provide more information on the specific tree species and number/percentage of each.</p> <p>What proportion of the mixed woodland will be planted with conifers - and is Scots pine the only conifer species?</p>	<p>Approximately 17.6% (1.74 hectares) of the woodland will be planted with Scots pine. This will be the only conifer species. The remaining 82.4% (8.13) hectares will comprise deciduous native broadleaved planting which includes English oak, silver birch, wild cherry, common alder and downy birch</p> <p>The Forest Research trial plantings in the riverine area will be approximately 1.0 ha of downy birch (<i>Betula pubescens</i>) and 1.0 ha of common alder (<i>Alnus glutinosa</i>), so approximately 2,500 trees of each species.</p>

10	Do you have alternatives to ash (many are dying along the Redlake)	Generally, Forestry England's policy for planting ash in new woodlands is guided by a precautionary principle to minimise the impact of ash dieback. Our emphasis is on planting a diverse range of resilient species to ensure the long-term health and sustainability of England's forests. Alternative species that can fulfil similar ecological and commercial roles as ash include sycamore, hornbeam, silver birch and small leaved lime and these, amongst other species, are included in our planting plans.
11	Are conifers required to meet your objectives of a sustainable timber source ?	Yes, conifers are required to make the woodland financially sustainable in the short to medium term. Where appropriate in the landscape native conifer species are included in the mix.
Access and footpaths		
12	Provide access to the new woodland other than from the public lane. Improve access from Lower Lye into Bucknall Woods	We have no plans to create additional entrances or paths connecting Bucknall Woods to the new woodland at Lower Lye. The land between them is privately owned. Lower Lye will give local people a quieter area to enjoy, away from the busier woodlands nearby that are more suitable for cyclists and horse riding.
13	The woodland should be for pedestrians only - deter motorbikes and bikes with kissing gates, not just signage	The new woodland will be open to the public, but there will be no right of access to motorised vehicles. We will consider gate options that will allow walkers, pushchairs, and wheelchair users to enter the new woodland at one of the pedestrian entrances at the eastern end of the site.
14	Suggestion that the Heart of Wales route diversion through the new woodland should be along the north side of the lane, rather than the proposed south of the lane.	Our proposals include an alternative to walking along the road (the route of the Heart of Wales Way), rather than an official diversion. We have chosen the south side of the lane to avoid damage to the existing hedgerow (we would need to create a new access through this) and the need for an additional crossing over the stream.
15	Would it be possible to reroute the Heart of Wales Line trail?	We have no plans to reroute the Heart of Wales Line Trail.

Wildlife and birds		
16	Maximise opportunity to attract rare birds of prey by keeping the valley floor open as a wetland, unobstructed by trees.	Our policy is to protect any raptor or species listed under Schedule 1 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 in the UK found within our woodlands. The new woodland will provide suitable habitat for rare raptor species known to be resident in the Shropshire landscape.
17	Establish links with adder colony close by. The south facing flank of calcareous grass would be ideal for Herpetofauna on south facing flank.	The wet woodland habitat created on site will be sympathetic to reptile and amphibian species and all operations will be preceded by an ecological assessment.
Community, education and employment		
18	Encourage residents to participate in the planting and establishment of the new woodland and provide practical and educational benefits	We anticipate the normal range of public access and educational events to be offered in line with other Forestry England woodlands.
19	Employ local labour and consider selling deer to the local butchers	Although the woodland at Lower Lye is relatively small scale it will support regional employment through the contractors we will employ to help with planting, fencing, and maintenance. We have national arrangements for selling venison, however we may be able to make local arrangements where these meet requirements.
Consultation		
20	Publish the Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA) survey	We have undertaken a PEA survey, and this has been shared with Natural England and our other statutory stakeholders for review. The survey has helped to inform our final designs and will be included in the documents we submit with our proposals for the new woodland to Forestry Commission for regulatory review. In addition, the PEA survey has also been carefully reviewed by our senior ecologist.

Impact of the new woodland on views and landscape		
21	Concern about the loss of an uninterrupted vista along the Redlake Valley -	We have considered the open nature of the Redlake Valley in our design and have left large areas of the site unplanted or planted with shrubs or low-density broadleaf trees. To reduce the impact on the landscape and keep the views along the valley from the road and public rights of way, we have left a corridor of open space and shrub planting of at least 20 meters on each side of the road and up to 50 meters in places.
Fencing and hedgerows		
22	Provide dog proof fence to prevent sheep worrying	We are not proposing to include dog proof fencing on the boundary of the new woodland; we expect visitors to be responsible dog owners and follow our dog code . We will ensure that in areas of the woodland where boundary fences exist, these will be maintained.
Traffic and parking		
23	Include car parking, passing spaces and laybys. Concern that visitors to the new woodland by car will block access to properties close to the new woodland	There will be space for approximately 3 cars at the operational access point on the northern side of the road. We have no plans to include passing spaces along the lane or additional car parking at Bucknall Woods.
	Will there be more forest vehicles using the forestry track towards Nettledale and Woodside?	There will be no direct access from Bucknell Wood to Lower Lye.
Flood mitigation		
24	Seek to quantify the benefits of the new woodland on flood mitigation	We will investigate the possibility of entering the site as a pilot for the Woodland Water Code which has 3 elements - water quality, river shading and flood alleviation. The initial call for pilot sites just looks at water quality but we understand that there is potential for further pilots.
25	Include a more natural fallen tree type obstruction to support flood mitigation rather than the leaky dam illustrated in the consultation materials	The visual used in our consultation materials was for illustration purposes. We are liaising with the Shropshire Wildlife Trust to agree the details, however any solution will likely revolve around woody debris rather than

		anything that would obstruct the flow of the river. There are many multi stem trees along the riverbank that we could use.
Seed stand		
26	How long will the trees in the seed stand be there and what type of woodland would potentially follow	We anticipate that the tree stand will be there for the foreseeable future to manage the long-term future supply of aspen. If it is no longer required then it would suit easy conversion to native woodland, and aspen has a very high biodiversity value.
Concern about the Impact on agricultural land and food production		
27	<p>Forestry England is creating new woodlands which will capture carbon, restore and connect habitats, enhance biodiversity, supply sustainable, homegrown timber and be great places for people to enjoy. Sites are individually and carefully assessed so they are 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.</p> <p>Our proposals for a new woodland at Lower Lye support the Government's tree planting targets to create 30,000 hectares of new woodland every year by 2025 and provide a source of sustainable homegrown timber. Currently the UK imports over 80% of its timber and we are more reliant on imported timber than imported food (40% of food is imported).</p> <p>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 (Agricultural Land Classification (ALC) grades 1 & 2). The land at Lower Lye is ALC grade 3. All landowners choose how they should best manage their land to suit their business.</p>	

Appendix B: Email to local residents

Dear neighbour

Public consultation on draft design proposals for Lower Lye Coronation Wood

Thank you for your response to our early engagement survey about our new woodland at Lower Lye.

I am now writing to let you know about the launch of a public consultation on our draft design proposals for a new woodland at Lower Lye. These are available to view and comment upon until 28th May at:

[Lower Lye Wood - Forestry Commission England - Citizen Space \(forestryengland.uk\)](https://forestryengland.uk)

While we continue with our detailed planning for the new 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 in the autumn of last 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 events

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

Date: Tuesday 14th May

Time: 4.00pm - 7.00pm

Location: Bucknell Memorial Hall, Bucknell, SY7 0AA

The new woodland at Lower Lye will be one of many that Forestry England is planting and will support Government targets to increase tree planting across the UK.

Information about responding to the consultation and our public drop in events are detailed below.

Kind regards

The Woodland Creation Team

Forestry England

woodland.creation@forestryengland.uk

www.forestryengland.uk/woodland-creation

Responding to the consultation

The consultation will be open until the 28th May.

Online: We encourage you submit your response online. You can view our plans and submit your views at: [Lower Lye Wood - Forestry Commission England - Citizen Space \(forestryengland.uk\)](http://www.forestryengland.uk/woodland-creation)

If you are unable to do this, you can respond via email, typing 'Lower Lye 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 28th May. 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.

Appendix C: Consultation feedback form

A proposed new woodland at Lower Lye

Overview

Forestry England would like to share with you draft plans for the proposed new woodland in Lower Lye.

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.

Your feedback

1. Please use this space to add feedback on the proposed plans

Should you wish to provide further comments, please continue on a separate sheet of paper with your name clearly marked at the top and attach it to this response.

2. Are you responding as:
Please select all that apply

- ☐ A local resident
- ☐ A local business
- ☐ A political representative

Other: please describe:

Your details

You can submit information without completing the address, postcode, are you and email details, but if you chose to do so they will be held by Forestry England as per our privacy policy [Privacy Policy | Forestry England](#).

1. What is your address?

2. What is your postcode?

3. What is your email address?

Appendix D: Consultation information, exhibition boards and information available to view and download on the website at: [Lower Lye Woodland - Forestry Commission England - Citizen Space \(forestryengland.uk\)](https://www.forestryengland.uk)



 **Forestry England**

Growing the nation's forests

A proposed new woodland at Lower Lye in the Shropshire Hills

We are planting new woodlands to expand the nation's forests

We are working on designs for a new woodland at Lower Lye, within the Shropshire Hills National Landscape and approximately 1.3 miles northwest of Bucknell. We would like your comments and feedback 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 to provide green corridors for wildlife to move and thrive across the landscape.

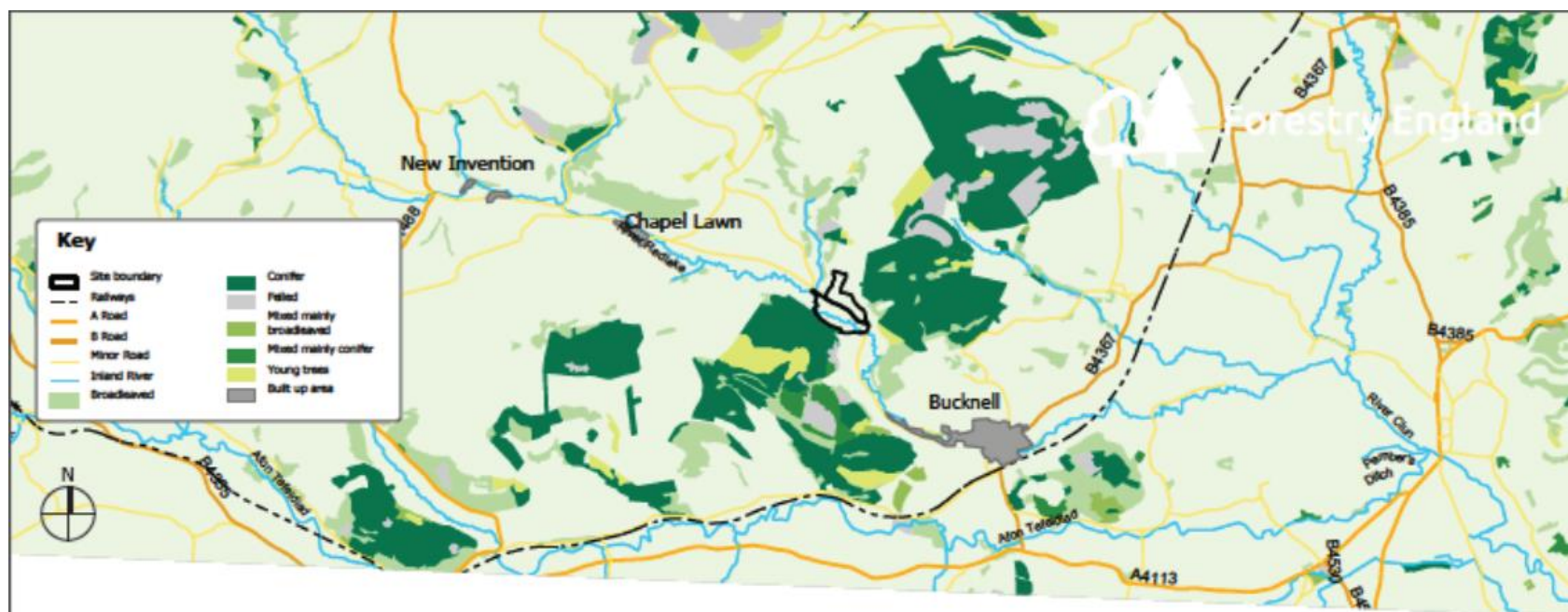
Our plans are part of the government's commitment to increasing tree planting rates across the UK to 30,000 hectares per year by the end of this parliament, supported by the Nature for Climate Fund. We aim to plant at least 2,000 hectares of new, high-quality woodlands across England.

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

Scan the QR code to find out more:

forestryengland.uk



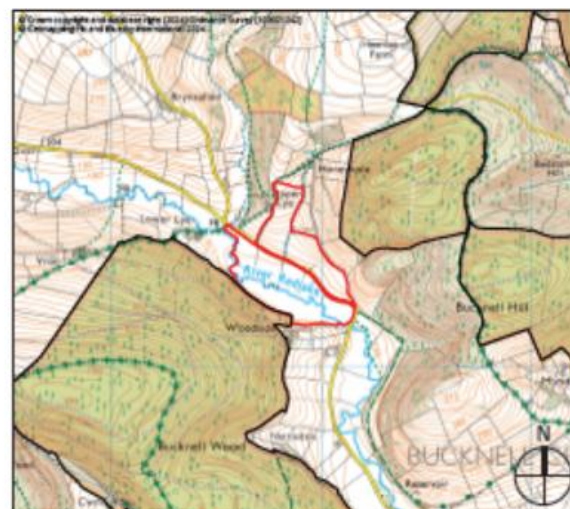


Site Location & Context

The proposed new woodland is in the south-western part of the Shropshire Hills National Landscape, approximately 10 miles west of Ludlow, close to the village of Bucknell. The site lies between Bucknell Wood to the southwest and Hopton Woods to the northeast.

The site for the proposed woodland lies within Natural England's National Character Area (NCA) 83 Clun and North West Herefordshire Hills. The landscape is undulating, tranquil, rural and sparsely populated, divided by the river valleys of the Clun and Teme. Higher land is often wind-swept heath and grassland. Typically plantation and native woodland are on the hilltops and upper valley slopes.

The landscape at Lower Lye is sensitive by virtue of being in the Shropshire Hills National Landscape and considerable thought has been given to protect the landscape character throughout the design process.





The existing site

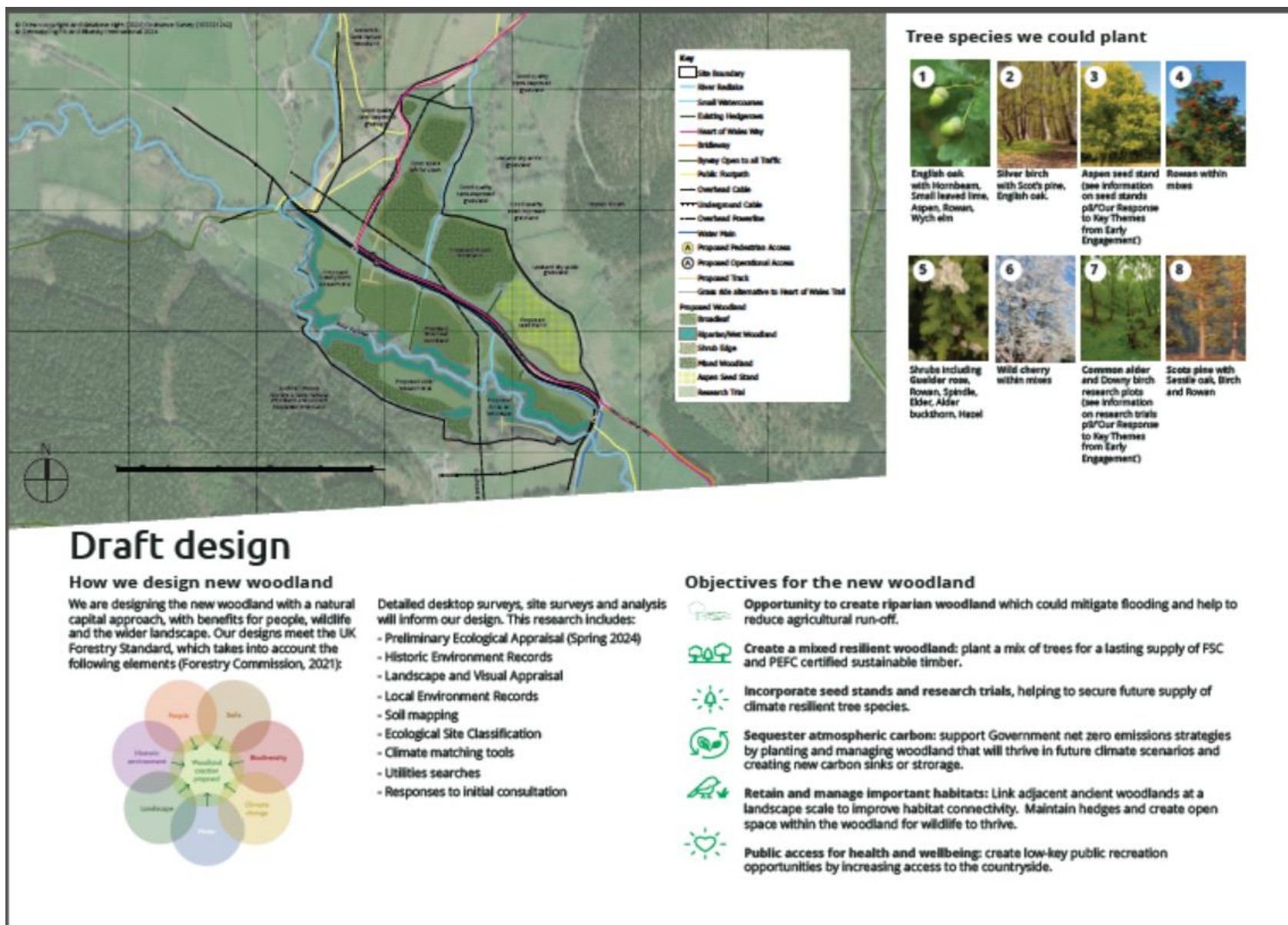
In the Redlake Valley, the site at Lower Lye straddles the River Redlake and Chapel Lawn Road. A ribbon of riparian¹ woodland grows along the river and along a small watercourse that runs from Honeyhole, north of the site, down to the road. The fields either side of the river form the floodplain and are relatively flat and often wet where there is no underground drainage. There is evidence of an old meander in the river. The land is pasture farmland currently grazed by sheep, and compacted as a result. Field boundaries are predominantly hedgerows, typical of this area. Areas of good quality semi-improved grassland and calcareous grassland² have been identified directly north of the site.

¹ relating to or situated on the bank of a river

² grasslands characterised by species-rich grass and herb communities which grow on shallow lime-rich soils

Photos: 1. View of the site from the east. 2. River Redlake. 3. Field south of River Redlake. 4. View west from Bucknell Hill. 5. View west along Chapel Lawn Road.







How the new woodland could look

Our initial designs include proposals to:

- Plant riparian woodland on the floodplains adjacent to the River Redlake.
- Plant predominantly broadleaf woodland with some Scots pine, blending well with the surrounding woodland.
- Provide buffers around hedgerow and plant shrubs at the edges of woodland to create areas for wildlife to thrive.
- Retain key views up the valley by keeping the planting back from the road.
- Retain key views from adjacent properties by leaving areas of open space that also provide connectivity with surrounding priority grassland habitat.
- Include an Aspen seed stand to ensure the future supply of climate resilient trees.
- Include research plots for Common alder and Downy birch.
- Possibility to bypass the public highway for a section on the Heart of Wales National Trail.

Natural Flood Management



Leaky dams across the river



Seasonal wetlands

As part of developing the design we have met with the Environment Agency and the Shropshire Wildlife Trust at Lower Lye to discuss our proposals. We are exploring ideas and funding for natural flood management approaches such as leaky dams and seasonal wetlands.

Woodlands are great natural flood managers. They intercept rainwater that is directly evaporated back into the atmosphere and slow down the rate at which rainfall reaches the river.

The presence of trees and surface roots increases local surface roughness and helps to hold-back and slow floodwaters.

The forest floor usually has a looser structure and more organic matter than soil in farmland. It acts like a sponge temporarily holding water between the layers of dead leaves, soil, roots and organic matter, where it then slowly evaporates or is absorbed by tree roots and released back into the air.



Forestry England

Your views are important to us - let us know what you think

Responding to this consultation

We encourage you to submit your response online. You can view our plans and submit your views by completing the online feedback form at:

- <https://consult.forestryengland.uk/forest-districts/lower-lye-woodland/>

If you are unable to do this, you can respond via email at

- woodland.creation@forestryengland.uk

All views should be received by Tuesday 28th May

What's next ?

- Review of consultation feedback
- Further design work to refine our proposals
- Application to the Forestry Commission for permission to create the new woodland
- Initial planting (Winter 2024)

Scan the QR code
to find out more:

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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 at Lower Lye. Here are our responses to the key themes and questions people raised.

Public access

The new woodland at Lower Lye will be open to the public. 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.

Existing Public Rights of Way and unsurfaced grass rides will give access for walkers in the new wood and link it to the wider countryside. We are not proposing to create new trails to link with existing woodland or create surfaced trails for horse-riding or cycling. Our proposal to include a grass unsurfaced ride in the woodland to the south of the road offers a safer alternative to people that currently walk on the road.

We are mindful of not significantly increasing car traffic, particularly as the road is narrow. Our proposal does not include public parking. We will consider signs to discourage parking along the lane should this be necessary.

Our draft design includes open spaces and glades that would provide peaceful picnic spots. Once the woodland is established, we would be happy to hear from local organisations and schools who would like to use the new woodland for children's activities such as forest schools and educational visits.

Visitors will be welcome to walk their dogs in the new woodland, but we won't put a fence around the whole woodland. Dog owners must be responsible and keep their pets under control in all the forests and woodland we care for, following signs and our Forest Dog Code.

Design

We are doing ecology surveys to tell us more about the plants, wildlife and ecosystem at Lower Lye. This will help shape our final design for the new woodland. Our draft design includes meadow and grassland open spaces to create diverse habitats for wildlife and connect to existing open spaces outside the woodland. This will be an attractive environment for birds and we are looking at the possibility of including perches for birds of prey.

The area immediately next to the river will include native trees at a lower density than in the rest of the woodland to protect the river habitat and help stabilise the banks. We are not proposing any bridges.

We want to keep the existing hedges and trees as part of the design where possible, as well as creating glades and rides with trees planted away from the road.

Our plan for the new, resilient woodland with a variety of trees at Lower Lye, aims to:

- create a new riparian (riverside) and floodplain woodland which would mitigate flooding and reduce agricultural run-off.
- improve connections to the woodlands next to Lower Lye at Bucknell Wood and Hopton Wood.
- provide more opportunities for informal access to the countryside.

- take carbon from the atmosphere, supporting Government in achieving net zero emissions targets.
- include areas for us to grow trees and collect their seeds and climate-matching trials run by Forest Research, helping to secure future supply of climate resilient tree species.

The site is small with few existing seed trees nearby so we will plant trees so it can establish quickly rather than wait for it to establish woodland by natural colonisation.

Access for us to maintain the new woodland and harvest sustainable timber will be planned around improvements to the existing field gates.

The trees we will plant

We are using years of experience and the latest scientific evidence to plan in detail for the trees we will plant for 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 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.

We propose to plant a range of species at Lower Lye, including Scots pine and native broadleaves such as oak and rowan. Alder, birches and willow species will be planted closest to the river and help to stabilise the banks and reduce soil erosion, whilst a mix of broadleaves, native shrubs and naturalised conifers will complement the local landscape, provide seasonal colour for visitors and increase resilience.

Water, wetlands and flooding

As part of developing the design we have met with the Environment Agency and Shropshire Wildlife Trust at Lower Lye to discuss our proposals. We are working closely with Shropshire Wildlife Trust to explore ideas and funding for natural flood management approaches such as including leaky dams, open drainage swales and a seasonal wetland.

Trees close to rivers are important for helping to manage the flow of water into the river after it has rained. They hold back water better than short plants as rain gets caught in the leaves and branches where it eventually evaporates into the air. Water also runs down the trunks directly into the soil or drips through the leaves and importantly, this slows down rainfall reaching the river. Underneath the trees, some of the water is held temporarily by the layers of dead leaves, soil and organic matter on the forest floor, where it slowly evaporates or is absorbed by tree roots and released back into the air.

Studies in the UK have shown that in areas covered by broadleaved woodland, up to 25% of the rainwater that falls is intercepted, while in evergreen forests, this can be as high as 45%.

The soil in woodlands usually has a looser structure and more organic matter than soil in farmland, so (unless it's already saturated), it can hold onto rainwater longer and slow

down its flow into rivers and streams.

Trees and other woody vegetation in floodplain woodlands increase the "hydraulic roughness" of the ground, holding back and slowing down flood flows. Trees in riparian areas also stabilise river banks, reducing silt and help to contain floodwater.

Landscape and Views

Our design sensitively considers how close the new woodland will be to our new neighbours. Where there are key views from properties, we have left open space and have shrub planting at the edges of the woodland for visual diversity. We will have more broadleaf trees in these areas because they are shorter than some conifers, generally live longer and need managing less often. We clearly heard that it is important to have views from the public footpaths in and around the site. Where possible, our design will frame and enhance existing views and we will establish open spaces between the new woodland and key viewpoints.

Establishing and managing the woodland

We aim to plant the new woodland in winter 24/25. It will take approximately five years to establish and maintenance during this time is important to ensure its long-term success. The woodland will be managed by the Forestry England team and local contractors.

The woodland will eventually provide a small supply of sustainable timber. We plan to manage the woodland as "continuous cover" without cutting down larger areas of trees before replanting them. This approach maintains tree cover and biodiversity and allows for the gradual removal of individual trees or small groups of trees, leaving the majority of the canopy intact. We anticipate beginning to thin out the trees in approximately 25 years.

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We are increasing the number of trees we plant which we grow from our own seeds or other UK sources to guarantee our supply of home-grown trees for our forests and woodlands. They come from seed stands with trees specially grown for their seeds and we grow new trees at our nursery in Cheshire. The seed stand trees are managed differently to give us seed, much like a fruit orchard. The trees in the stand are kept low, around 1.5m, and are regularly thinned to give the best quality seed. This makes the seed easier to collect, pick from and helps produce more seed. We plan to plant aspen to give us a supply of seeds.

The UK is expected to experience hotter and drier summers, warmer and wetter winters, and an increased frequency of extreme weather events such as storms and droughts. To keep our forests resilient to these changes, we are planning now for what trees and mixtures of species we will be planting in the future.

We will test seed from some common tree species that we could continue to plant in the future, collected from different locations with different climates. Where seed comes from is known as its provenance. For example, we will compare trees adapted to milder, wetter conditions with those from warmer, drier regions to identify any obvious differences.

We are planning to have some small provenance trials of birch and alder at Lower Lye. This will help identify local varieties of trees which might be expected to survive and thrive in a different climate.

The UK is home to six species of deer and they are not controlled by natural predators, such as bears, lynx and wolves which are extinct. Without predators, deer populations become unnaturally big, and their browsing can damage young trees and wildlife habitats. In the short-term, this can kill some trees 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.

Forestry England is part of the [Deer Initiative](#), a partnership that promotes sustainable deer management in England and Wales. We will use deer fencing to protect large blocks of new planting and tree tubes in smaller areas. Our highly skilled wildlife rangers replace the role of Britain's missing predators by safely and humanely controlling deer 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 manages deer can be found [here](#).

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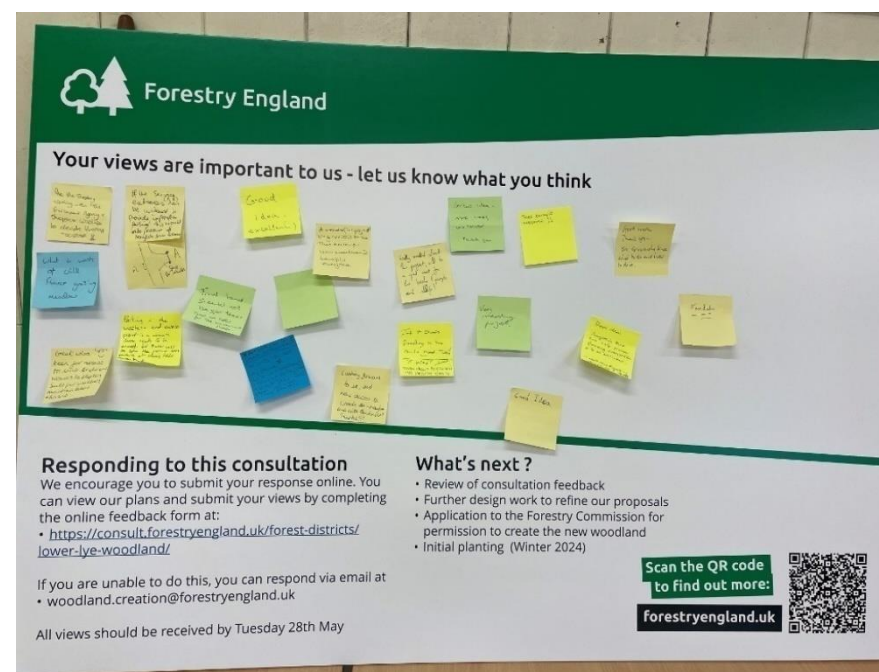
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Our proposals for a new woodland at Lower Lye support the Government's tree planting targets to create 30,000 hectares of new woodland every year by 2025 and provide a source of sustainable homegrown timber. Currently the UK imports over 80% of its timber and we are more reliant on imported timber than imported food (40% of food is imported). Meeting the government's woodland creation targets would only need less than 10 percent of this potential land so will not have a significant impact on food production.

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). The land at Lower Lye is graded at 3. All landowners choose how they should best manage their land to suit their business.

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Forestry England



New Woodland at Lower Lye

Public Consultation Event on our proposed design

Tuesday 14th May 4pm -7pm, Bucknell
Memorial Hall

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 provide feedback visit

<https://consult.forestryengland.uk/forest-districts/lower-lye-woodland>

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



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The woodland will eventually provide a small supply of sustainable timber. We plan to manage the woodland as “continuous cover” without cutting down larger areas of trees before replanting them. This approach maintains tree cover and biodiversity and allows for the gradual removal of individual trees or small groups of trees, leaving the majority of the canopy intact. We anticipate beginning to thin out the trees in approximately 25 years.

7. What is a seed stand?

We are increasing the number of trees we plant which we grow from our own seeds or other UK sources to guarantee our supply of home-grown trees for our forests and woodlands. They come from seed stands with trees specially grown for their seeds and we grow new trees at our nursery in Cheshire. The seed stand trees are managed differently to give us seed, much like a fruit orchard. The trees in the stand are kept low, about 1.8m, and are gradually thinned out to have wider space between them. This makes the trees easier to pick from and helps produce more seed. We plan to plant aspen to give us a supply of seeds.

8. What are the research trials you are planning?

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We are planning to have some small provenance trials of birch and alder at Lower Lye. This will help identify local varieties of trees which might be expected to survive and thrive in a different climate.

9. Protecting the new woodland from deer

The UK is home to six species of deer and they are not controlled by natural predators, such as bears, lynx and wolves which are extinct. Without predators, deer populations become unnaturally big, and their browsing can damage young trees and wildlife habitats. In the short-term, this can kill some trees 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.

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Deer fencing would be removed and where possible recycled after the trees become established.

10. Why are you planting agricultural land?

Forestry England is creating new woodlands which will capture carbon, restore and connect habitats, enhance biodiversity, supply sustainable, homegrown timber and be great places for people to enjoy. Sites are individually and carefully assessed so they are 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.

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³ [Forestry Facts & Figures 2023 \(forestryresearch.gov.uk\)](https://www.forestryresearch.gov.uk/)

⁴ [United Kingdom Food Security Report 2021: Theme 2: UK Food Supply Sources - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/672212/United_Kingdom_Food_Security_Report_2021_Theme_2_UK_Food_Supply_Sources.pdf)

Appendix E: Code frame for consultation responses received on-line and by e-mail

Theme	Total Mentions
Access and footpaths	7
Deter access for motorbikes and bikes - consider kissing gates, not just signs	1
Facilitate public access to Lower Lye Wood other than from the public lane (bearing in mind that it is over a mile from the Bucknell Woods entrance)	1
Heart of Wales route diversion through the new wood to the south of the lane. The natural route would be along the north side, avoiding the need to cross the lane twice	1
Improve access into Bucknell Woods (A foot/horse/cycle path running from the already planned operational access.	1
Plenty of woods locally for the public to visit/more suitable areas for planting	1
Suggestions for improving access into Bucknell Woods	1
Welcome the opportunity to discuss whether it would be possible to reroute the Heart of Wales Line Trail	1
Community, education, and employment	4
Employ local labour	1
Encourage residents to participate in planting and establishment	1
Provide practical and educational benefits	1
Sell deer to the local retailers	1
Consultation	1
Publication of the PEA survey	1
Fencing and hedgerows	1
Provide a dog proof fence to prevent sheep worrying	1
Flood mitigation	3
Leaky dam can promote bank erosion and be a barrier to the passage of fish	1
Quantify the benefits of the new woodland on flood mitigation	1
Recommend a more natural fallen tree type obstruction over the leaky dam illustration	1
General positive comments	1
General positive	1
Impact on agricultural land and food production	3
Do not plant trees on good grassland	1
Impact on food supply	1
Loss of agricultural land	1
Seedstand	2

Theme	Total Mentions
How long will the trees in the seedstand be there and what type of woodland would potentially follow?	1
More detail the potential visual impact of the management of the trees in the tree stand	1
Traffic and parking	7
Add pull ins/passing spaces for traffic	1
Do you intend to expand the limited parking at the entrance to Bucknell Woods?	1
Increase in traffic on narrow lane	1
Parking will block entrance track and access to properties as the new woodland access is very close by	1
Provide parking	1
Single track road not suitable for more traffic	1
Would there be more vehicles using the forestry track towards Nettledale and Woodside?	1
Tree species	6
Would the objectives on a sustainable timber source be met with broadleaf species or is it in relation to this aspect that conifer species would be in mind?	1
Deciduous trees	1
Do you have alternatives to Ash (many are dying along the Redlake)	1
Include Black Poplar	1
More information about the proportion of conifers in the mixed woodland	1
More information on the specific tree species	1
Views	2
Halt destruction of green valley	1
Impact on views	1
Wildlife and birds	2
Establish links with adder colony close by and plant Herpetofauna on south facing flank (is it already present?)	1
Maximise opportunity to attract rare birds of prey by keeping the valley floor open as a wetland, unobstructed by trees	1
Woodland design	9
Current plan falls short of maximising ecological value at expense of providing an amenity woodland	1
Deciduous blocks on the valley floor will overshadow the wetland	1
Design the woodland with much more focus on species specific wildlife	1
Exponential growth for biodiversity depends on maximising the wetland area unobstructed by tall trees whilst scrub trees /bushes will serve to help alleviate flooding.	1
Extend the wetland so that it is wider and longer	1

Theme	Total Mentions
Include more traditional woodland such as coppice and standards	1
Provide more open wood pasture within the riparian area to mitigate flooding and minimise the impact on the valley landscape	1
The south flank of grassland should be left open and not at risk of being overshadowed by trees	1
What size is the hedgerow buffer zone - preference for the widest buffer zone to be used	1
Woodland management	1
Introduce effective measure to manage the deer population	1
Grand Total	49

Appendix F: Letters/emails announcing the launch of the consultation

Letters/emails were sent to the following stakeholders:

Category
Bedstone and Bucknell Parish Council
BT openreach
Bucknell Flood Action Group
Butterfly conservation
Clun Town Council together with Chapel Lawn
Environment agency
National Flood Forum
Hopton Castle CP
Little Bryncalid
Mortimer Ward Cllrs (Shropshire County Council)
MP (Ludlow constituency)
National Grid
Natural England
Redlake Valley Community Benefit Society
Rose Kingdom
RSPB
Severn Trent
Shropshire County Council
Shropshire Hills National Landscapes
Shropshire Wildlife Trust
Woodside

Appendix G: Stakeholder responses

We received consultation responses from the stakeholders listed in the table below:

Environment Agency

Shropshire Hills National Landscape Partnership