

New Luckhurst Wood - a new woodland in Smarden, Kent

Consultation report and our response to key issues raised

May 2026



Contents

1. Executive summary	3
2. About the Consultation.....	3
2.1 Introduction	3
2.2 Objectives of the new woodland	4
2.3 Consultation purpose.....	4
2.4 Early Engagement	4
2.5 Early engagement feedback.....	5
2.6 Who we consulted - public consultation	6
2.7 Dates and duration	6
2.8 What we asked	6
2.9 Methods of responding.....	6
2.10 Consultation materials and publicity	7
3. Consultation feedback	8
3.1 Consultation response overview	8
3.2 Consultation response by theme	8
3.3 General positive/supportive comments	9
3.5 Negative comments/concerns	9
3.6 Questions, comments and suggestions.....	9
3.7 Feedback from the consultation drop in event.....	12
4. Summary of stakeholder responses.....	13
5. Our responses to issues raised	14
Appendix A: Our response to issues raised	21
Appendix B: Consultation information.....	25
Appendix C: Consultation questionnaire	35
Appendix D: Example letters/emails announcing the launch of the consultation.....	37
Appendix E: Code frame - all comments by theme	39
Appendix F: Stakeholders we contacted	41

1. Executive summary

Between 9 February and 8 March, 2026, we held a consultation on proposals for the designs of a new woodland on land we have purchased in Smarden, near Ashford, Kent.

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

We received 26 individual responses to the consultation, including 6 from stakeholders. Whilst many responses included 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 changes:

- We have included a new entrance for easier pedestrian access to the woodland north of Bethersden Road.
- In response to feedback from Natural England:
 - We are working to source locally grown elm trees that are resistant to Dutch elm disease. This will help create and connect suitable habitat for the white-letter hairstreak butterfly.
 - Changing the existing 10m buffer to a wavy edge (10-20m wide) along the river to create dappled shade, while also supporting the natural colonisation of shrubs and ground flora already present along the site edges.

Over the coming weeks, 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 woodland in Smarden, near Ashford, Kent. 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:

- **Future forest resources and resilience:** plant a mix of tree species to create a resilient woodland, for a lasting supply of sustainable timber.
- **Thriving habitats for wildlife:** increase biodiversity on site by creating a mosaic of habitats including areas of high forest, low density woodland, wet woodland and open spaces to enhance the landscape.
- **Public access for health and wellbeing:** create low-key public recreation opportunities with new green space for people to walk in the woodland.
- **Benefits for the wider landscape:** capture carbon, supporting net zero emissions targets.
- **Include research trials:** to test which less common broadleaved tree species might be suitable for a future supply of sustainable timber

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 30 September and 21 October 2025, we sent letters to 114 addresses within 1000m of the boundary of the proposed new woodland. We included a map showing the boundary of the new woodland and asked local people to complete an online survey to tell us what they think we should consider as we design 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 Weald of Kent
- Parish councils of Smarden, Biddenden, and High Halden
- District and Ward members for Ashford Rural West, Biddenden Ward, Weald Central Ward and Weald North Ward.

We received 80 responses, including responses from Smarden Parish Council, ward members from Ashford Borough Council and Kent County Council, and the British Horse Society.

2.5 Early engagement feedback

Feedback to our early engagement included general positive comments as well as questions, suggestions and concerns around the following themes:

1. **Community involvement** - suggestions included hosting community planting events, offering forest school activities, adding simple site and plant information, and involving local schools and clubs in the project.
2. **Users of the new woodland**
Walkers: include walking routes, with suggestions to maintain and link existing footpaths to the current network, year-round paths for a wide range of users, as well as specific footpath improvements.
Horse-riders and cyclists: include off-road horse access through dedicated bridleways, horsebox parking, carriage-friendly paths and safe paid riding routes within the new woodland.
Dogs: include a fenced walking area and dog waste bins and concerns about anti-social behaviour with suggestions to secure the site to prevent fly-tipping.
3. **Parking, traffic and road impact** - consider impact on road, suggestions for the inclusion/exclusion of parking, concern that Bethersden Road is a fast road and to consider speed limits.
4. **Woodland amenities** - include visitor amenities and family-friendly spaces, including benches, a café, toilets, play areas, picnic spots and educational trails to support learning and outdoor activities.
5. **Tree species and woodland planting** - include mixed sustainable woodland and native trees, that are disease and climate resistant with a preference for a mix of fast and slow-growing species. Include open spaces, wildflowers, restore hedgerows and the retain sight lines to the

North Downs. Consider privacy for immediate neighbours in your planting design.

6. **Woodland design** - consider wildlife needs in the woodland design, with specific suggestions to consider newts and other reptiles, the presence of badger sets and to keep some areas exclusively for wildlife without public access. Create ponds or water features to support birds and wildlife, linking paths to open areas for better connectivity.

Appendix A responds to the key issues raised from early engagement. This feedback, together with further design and survey work, helped 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 Ashford Borough Council, Kent County Council, and the local parish councils of Smarden, Biddenden and High Halden.
- 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 9 February to 8 March 2026.

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 New Luckhurst Wood.

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: <https://consult.forestryengland.uk/forest-districts/nluckhurstw>
- Giving comments by email to Woodland.creation@forestryengland.uk
- Leaving comments at the public consultation drop in event on 26 February 2026, 4pm - 7pm at Smarden Village Hall.
- Feedback received at the drop in event is summarised separately in section 3.7 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: <https://consult.forestryengland.uk/forest-districts/nluckhurstw>

- 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 webpage:** on the Forestry England website at: [New Luckhurst Wood | Forestry England](#)
- **Citizen space consultation portal:** <https://consult.forestryengland.uk/forest-districts/nluckhurstw/>
- **Emails:** to local residents who responded to our early engagement.
- **Letters/emails:** to stakeholders.

- **Posters:** posters publicising the consultation and drop-in event were put up in locations close to the site. Posters were also shared with Smarden Parish Council for inclusion on their noticeboards/website where available.
- **Consultation drop-in event:** we held a drop in event at Smarden Village Hall on Thursday 26 February where visitors could view the proposals in person and speak to members of the Forestry England team.

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

3.1 Consultation response overview

We received 26 individual responses to the New Luckhurst consultation including 6 from stakeholders including Natural England, the Environment Agency and Historic England (listed in **Appendix F**). Feedback received at the consultation event is set out in section 3.6 of this document.

3.2 Consultation response by theme

The 26 responses were categorised into 61 comments and 9 themes and sub-categorised into a concern, question or comment/suggestion:

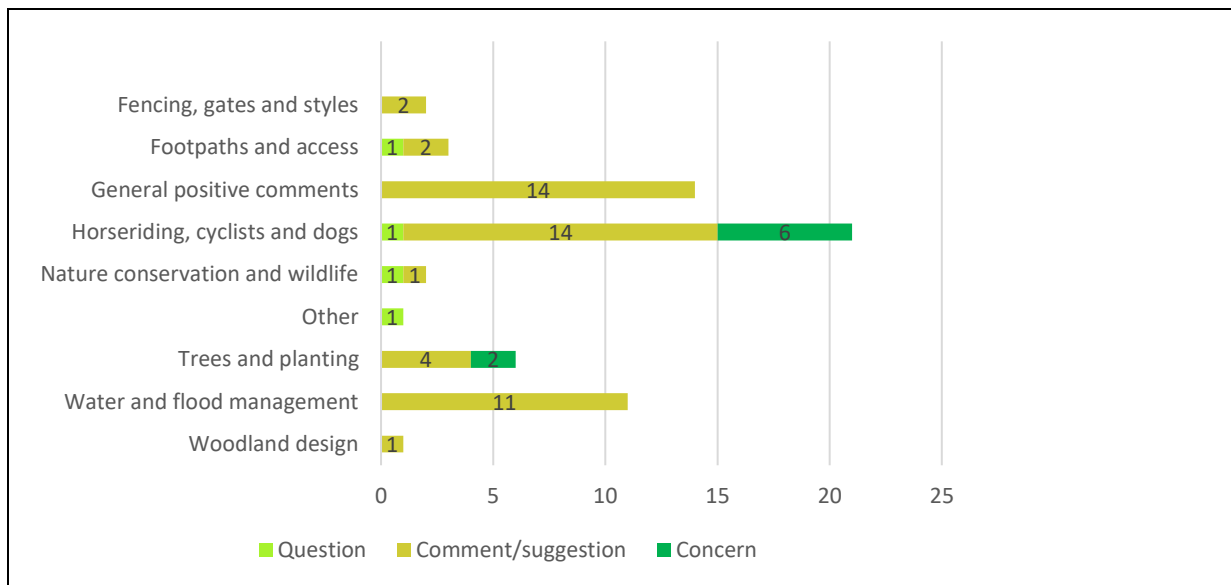


Figure 1 Responses by theme - 26 responses, 61 comments, 9 themes

3.3 General positive/supportive comments

We received 14 general overarching positive/supportive comments. These included: ‘We are supportive of the proposals’; ‘I think this is a fabulous initiative’; ‘Fully support these proposals’

3.4 Negative comments/concerns

We received 8 negative comments/concerns within the following themes:

Horse-riding cyclists and dogs (6)

- Concern about the lack of horse-riding and cycling provision within the new woodland and the increasing dangers of riding on the local roads.

Trees and planting (2)

- Concern that the inclusion of sweet chestnut and Douglas fir does not follow the local landscape character guidance or current best practice conservation advice for the area.
- Concern that the proposed wet woodland areas may be too dry with current land drainage in place.

3.5 Questions, comments and suggestions

In addition to the 14 general supportive comments (see section 3.3), we received a further 35 questions, comments and suggestions.

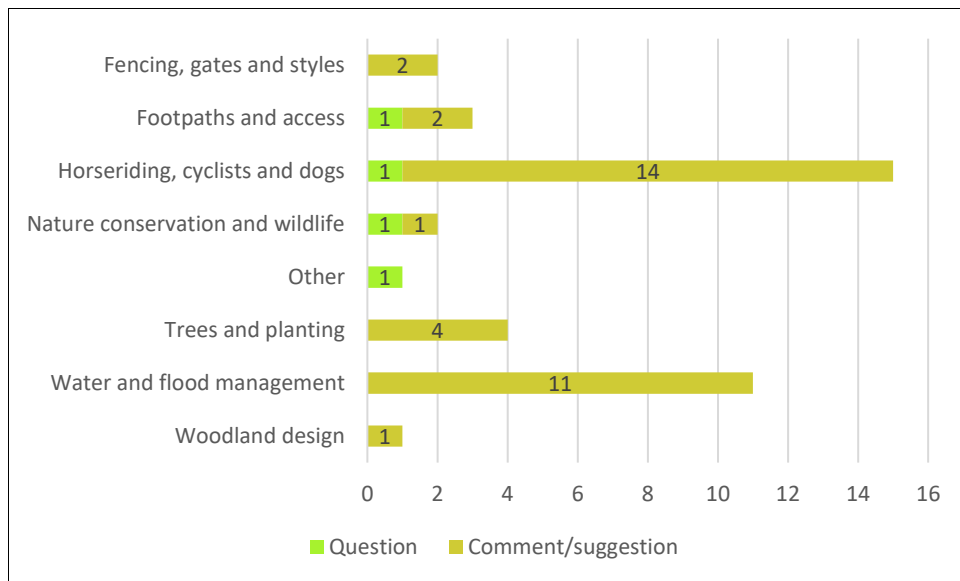


Figure 2: Questions, comments and suggestions

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

Fencing styles and gates (2)

- Fencing the whole site may be more effective than relying on individual tree guards.
- Include horse styles to stop motorised vehicles entering the new woodland.

Footpaths and access (3)

- Confirmation from Public Rights of Way that there were no objections to the proposal for the new woodland and an overview of guidance about maintaining the legal alignment of existing footpaths.
- Question about access to the land to the north of Bethersden Road and suggestion to reroute the footpath north of Bethersden to the opposite side of the brook, giving more direct access to Smarden.

Horse-riding, cyclists and dogs (15)

- Suggestions that space for horseboxes, cycles and bridlepaths should be included in the proposals, providing a safe alternative to dangerous local roads.
- Provide a link to the nearby bridleway AT168, should the site be extended in the future, and include a riding loop connecting to Bethersden Road.
- Include a dedicated space for dog walkers.

Nature conservation and wildlife (2)

- Question about how the woodland proposal aligns with the Local Nature Recovery strategy and suggestions to use geomorphology and hydrology to guide management of the site more effectively for nature conservation and use woody material or plant trees along the stream to help restore stream habitat.

Other

- Question about the naming of the woodland - why is it called New Luckhurst Wood?

Trees and planting (4)

- Request for more information about ground preparation relating to the understory of the woodland. Suggestions included increasing open space within the planting plan to mitigate the impact on farmland birds, such as skylarks; reduce tree planting on the south side of each of the ponds to allow light to reach them; and consider the inclusion of native broadleaf species close to the watercourse in some areas of the riparian woodland buffers.

Water and flood management (11)

- Comment agreeing with the proposed buffers around the watercourse and wet woodland planting.
- Suggestions to include the Upper Medway Drainage Board (IDB) and the local flood authority (Kent County Council) as part of the consultation process.
- Provide more information about the proposals to determine requirement for a Flood Risk Activity Permit; soil condition and any proposed measures to reduce run off, improve water storage and 'slow the flow' measures on site.
- Comment to confirm the consents process should new culverts be added or proposed works are within 8 metres of IDB maintained watercourses.
- Suggestion to consider other water management systems such as water meadows and beaver dams in the woodland design and remove unnecessary land drains to encourage wetland habitats.
- Suggestion to work in partnership with other organisations (for example the South East Rivers Trust or other groups) to help deliver biodiversity gain.

Woodland design (1)

- Keep as a woodland - not as a playground.

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

3.6 Feedback from the consultation drop in event

Around 15 people attended the public drop-in event which displayed the information already published on the [consultation website](#). Forestry England staff were also 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.

Many of the comments mirrored those already received in the formal consultation responses and included:

- **Suggestions/comments:**
 - include a community planting day and a request for information on volunteering at the site
 - Include large tree trunks for seating or natural seating areas
 - Land for sale in the area may be suitable for woodland creation
 - The bridleway to the south of the site has moved - and this should be checked with the Public Rights of Way team
 - Feedback on the consultation 'good consultation evening with helpful and knowledgeable staff'
 - Historically, there has been wild swimming in the ponds near New Luckhurst
- **Concern:** that there is no access point to the northern section of the woodland.

4. Summary of stakeholder responses

We received formal responses from the following stakeholders during the public consultation period. The stakeholder feedback is summarised below and key points have been included in the analysis detailed in section 3, Consultation Feedback, of this report.

New Luckhurst Wood - Stakeholder Responses
British Horse Society
East Kent Public Rights of Way
Environment Agency
Historic England
Kent County Council - Lead Local Flood Authority
Medway IDB
Natural England

British Horse Society

Notes the decision not to include parking in the new woodland will limit use to local people. Would welcome the inclusion of equestrian facilities so local horse-riders could also benefit. Acknowledges not all paths within the new woodland could be accessible for horse riding but suggests the inclusion of a loop linked to Bethersden road would make all the difference for local horse-riders who are able to reach it.

East Kent Public Rights of Way

Pleased that Public Footpaths AW197 and AW198 have been properly recognised in the woodland plans and will keep their natural surfaces. Provided the legally recorded definitive lines for both paths. Has no objections to the proposals but confirms that the routes cannot legally be altered without prior permission. Provides information about planning consents and permissions required around public rights of way.

Environment Agency

Raises questions and makes suggestions about how the proposals link with the Local Nature Recovery Strategy, natural flood risk management, soil condition, and use of conifer and non-native tree species. Has no objection in principle from a flood-risk perspective but recommends we engage with the Medway Internal Drainage Board and Kent County Council and consider how our proposals will avoid off-site flood risk.

Historic England

Confirmed they had reviewed the proposals and had no comment to make regarding impact on surrounding heritage assets.

Kent County Council - Lead Local Flood Authority

Kent County Council's Lead Local Flood Authority supports the initial woodland proposals, including maintaining buffer zones with wet woodland planting along watercourses. They note that the central watercourse is under the Upper Medway Internal Drainage Board (IDB), and any new culverts will need IDB consent due to byelaws on modifying watercourses. For watercourses outside the IDB's control, any alterations will require land drainage consent from Kent County Council.

Medway IDB

Supportive of the woodland creation. Provided mapping of the IDB-maintained watercourses and outlined the planning and byelaw requirement that no obstructions are permitted within 8 metres of the edge of board-maintained watercourses without IDB consent. Requests confirmation of whether any proposed works fall within this 8-metre zone.

Natural England

Generally supportive of the proposals, with suggestions for further consideration. These included mitigation suggestions to minimise the impact of the new woodland on farmland birds such as skylarks, by increasing open space within the planting plan; reducing tree planting on the south side of each of the ponds to allow light to reach them; and considering the inclusion of native broadleaf species close to the watercourse in some areas of the riparian woodland buffers.

The response also set out the background policy and guidelines that informed the suggested considerations.

5. Our responses to key 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 a new entrance for easier pedestrian access to the woodland north of Bethersden Road.
- In response to feedback from Natural England:
 - We are working to source locally grown elm trees that are resistant to Dutch elm disease. This will help create and connect suitable habitat for the white-letter hairstreak butterfly.

- Changing the existing 10m buffer to a wavy edge (10-20m wide) along the river to create dappled shade, while also supporting the natural colonisation of shrubs and ground flora already present along the site edges.

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

Fencing, stiles and gates in the new woodland

1. Fencing the whole site may be more effective than relying on individual tree guards.

Fencing will surround each of the individual compartments of the woodland rather than the whole site for ease of wildlife management and access to the public. Any fenced areas of the woodland will be kept as small as feasible and used only to protect trees and environmentally sensitive areas as the new woodland establishes. We will use tree tubes and stakes in places where fencing isn't suitable.

2. Include horse stiles to stop cars and motorbikes accessing the woodland

We have no plans to include parking at the new woodland. The only vehicles allowed on site will be those used for essential forest maintenance, and they will access the woodland only through the entrances shown on the plan.

These entrances will have locked gates to prevent any unauthorised vehicle access. This approach helps protect the woodland, avoids unnecessary hard surfacing or infrastructure, and keeps the site focused on habitat creation and low-impact, more-natural public enjoyment.

Footpaths and access

3. Reroute the footpath north of Bethersden Road to the opposite side of the brook, giving more direct access from Smarden to the smaller northern woodland parcel.

We have no plans to re-route any public footpaths that cross the site. Public footpath routes are the responsibility of the council and we have consulted with the Public Rights of Way team as part of this consultation.

4. Is there an access point for the woodland north of the Bethersden Road?

We have included a new pedestrian entrance to enable easier access to the woodland north of Bethersden Road.

5. Suggestions that the bridleway to the south of the site has moved - and this should be checked with the Public Rights of Way team

We have consulted the Public Rights of Way team as part of this process. They provided definitive maps showing the routes of the footpaths that cross the site, and we will follow these alignments as we finalise our designs and begin planting.

Horse riding, cyclists and dogs

6. Provide space for horse-riding in your proposals and include dedicated, safe spaces for riders and cyclists such as combined cycle and horse-riding paths and a loop connecting to Bethersden Road and Smarden.

We understand how important horse-riding and cycling is to many people in this part of Kent, and we have thought carefully about what provision we might be able to offer at New Luckhurst Wood.

Our funding for New Luckhurst Wood comes from the government's Trees Programme, which does not cover the cost of additional horse-riding or cycling infrastructure such as bridle gates or the creation of new surfaced trails. As a result, we're unable to provide dedicated horse-riding or cycling routes at this time.

We do offer dedicated horse-riding and cycling routes at other Forestry England woodlands where funding allows. One example is Bedgebury Forest. You can find out more here: <https://www.forestryengland.uk/bedgebury/horse-riding>
<https://www.forestryengland.uk/bedgebury/cycling-and-mountain-biking>

7. Include a dedicated space for dog walkers

The new woodland will be open for people to enjoy, and visitors will be welcome to walk their dogs. While we are not planning to provide a dedicated dog exercise area, the site will offer a natural space for local people to spend time outdoors. The primary focus of the project is to create a healthy, resilient woodland, with public access provided as an added benefit for the community. Dog owners must be responsible and keep their pets under control in all the forests and woodlands we care for, following signs and our Forest Dog Code.

Nature conservation and wildlife

8. Use an understanding of geomorphology and hydrology to manage the site more effectively for nature conservation. For example, use woody material or plant trees along the stream to help restore stream habitat.

The design includes buffer zones along the stream to protect existing habitat corridors. Plants linked to ancient woodland have been recorded in this area, as well as species such as otters. Leaving these buffer areas allows local species to continue to use and move along the corridors and enables the existing seed banks to naturally regenerate and recolonise, providing good local genetic plants. This approach is supported by wet woodland, riparian and scrub planting to further improve habitats for the species. Between the woodland canopy and the

watercourses, we are planting a wide range of woodland edge and shrub species. This will provide biodiversity benefits across the site by helping to diversify existing plant species. Plants that are already present in the ditches on site that need to be removed for the creation of culverts will be re-used for natural filtration, helping to reduce pollution, protect the existing habitat in the stream and retain important local seed banks. Plants we are considering include rushes, hemlock water dropwort, wild garlic/ramsons, cuckoo flower, lords and ladies.

9. How does the proposal link with the Local Nature Recovery Strategy?

The project team has reviewed the design to align with the Kent and Medway Local Nature Recovery Strategy. It supports key priorities by increasing woodland canopy cover and resilience, regenerating naturally developing scrub habitats, helping to clean rivers by reducing agricultural discharge, and changing how the land is managed - including restoring lost habitats and increasing connectivity and cover.

The design protects existing, species-rich native hedgerows and includes unplanted buffer areas along hedgerows, streams and ditches, and around ponds. These areas will allow plants already in the soil to naturally spread and grow, including plants typical of ancient woodlands such as primrose, dog's mercury, meadow sweet, English bluebell, ramsons and greater stitchwort. The design includes grass rides, riparian wet woodland along watercourses, and low-density broadleaf planting comprising native shrubs and small broadleaved trees such as alder, willow, aspen, black poplar, birch, purging buckthorn, spindle, hawthorn, blackthorn and crab apple. These habitats will improve and increase space for wildlife, supporting local priority species such as the otter, turtle dove, nightingale, great crested newt, adder, and pearl bordered and heath fritillary butterflies.

Other

10. Why is the woodland called New Luckhurst Wood?

The new woodland is called New Luckhurst Wood because the land was once part of New Luckhurst Farm. The name reflects the historic name of the farm rather than an existing woodland.

11. Include a community planting day

While our resources will be limited when it comes to supporting long-term volunteering opportunities on the site, we do recognise and value community involvement. A community planting day is something we would consider in the future, subject to capacity, potentially around year two or three, once the woodland is more established and better able to support this type of activity.

Trees and planting

12. Including sweet chestnut and Douglas fir does not follow local landscape character guidance or current best-practice conservation advice.

As part of the process for developing our designs for the new woodland, we conducted a landscape and visual appraisal (LVA). This concluded that the new woodland would have a neutral or beneficial effect on the local landscape. Sweet chestnut is a familiar and well-established tree in the Kent landscape, so is a suitable choice for this site. Douglas fir is planted in small areas to provide high-quality timber. The project has multiple objectives and while improving nature and wildlife is a key aim, we need to balance this with the production of sustainable timber. We have consulted with Natural England. Through its advisory role, it promotes the principle of planting the right trees in the right place, helping to protect important habitats and landscapes. Natural England is supportive of the proposals.

13. Provide more information about ground preparation relating to the understory of the woodland

The site has been seeded with a grass mix so it will be in the best condition possible when we come to plant the new woodland in the winter months. Before planting the trees, a machine will be used to create small bare patches of ground for each tree. Grass will be cut between the rows of trees and, where needed, targeted herbicide weed control will be used to stop grass competing with the young trees and help them to establish.

14. Increase open space within the planting plan to mitigate the impact on farmland birds namely skylarks, linnets and yellowhammer

The design includes open spaces such as rides and appropriate buffers along hedgerows, footpaths, the gas pipeline and around areas of water. We have increased the proposed buffer along the stream and ditch corridors from 10 metres to around 20 metres. This will allow the valuable existing seed bank to naturally spread and establish, helping to create more varied habitat structure. This is particularly beneficial for ground species such as skylark.

Retaining hedgerows, hedgerow buffers, and rides, along with new shrub planting, will help support birds such as linnets and yellowhammers, which nest in these habitats. The woodland will grow gradually over the next 10-20 years, with habitats successional closing and opening up through careful long-term management, including woodland thinning. The design includes a mix of open areas (rides), shrubs and woodland types (wet and mixed), so the site will continue to support farmland birds in the short, medium and long term.

Improving the variety and structure of habitats will also support feeding, health and ability to thrive, as a wider range of insects and seeds will be available across the site.

15. Reduce tree planting on the south side of each of the ponds to allow light to reach them

We have included a 10m buffer all the way around each of the ponds on the site, including on the southern aspect.

16. Consider the inclusion of native broadleaf species close to the watercourse in some areas of the riparian woodland buffers

The design mixes planting native broadleaf trees such as aspen, black poplar and alder with letting plants grow naturally from existing seeds along the watercourse. This helps manage how much sunlight reaches the water and creates more natural wildlife corridors. The stream buffers are also designed to reduce disturbance to riverside habitats used by wildlife such as great crested newts, otters, birds, bats and badgers. We are also exploring links with local elm and wild service tree planting projects run by organisations such as Kent County Council and others.

Water and flood management

17. IDB consent required if any new culverts are added or if the proposed works are within 8 metres of IDB maintained watercourses; watercourses outside of IDB jurisdiction will require consent from Kent County Council.

We have consulted with the IDB, Kent County Council's Flood Management Team and the Environment Agency as part of this consultation and note the consents requirements. Where we are proposing to include new culverts, we will consult with the relevant authorities.

18. Work in partnership with other organisations (for example, the South East Rivers Trust or other groups) and with local landowners to help deliver biodiversity gain

The project is moving forward at pace to a tight timetable. While this limits wider collaboration with other landowners at this stage, we would be open to working with other landowners on biodiversity net gain in the future.

19. Provide more information about the soil condition and any proposed measures to reduce runoff, restore soil health, improve water storage, and introduce 'slow the flow' measures on or near the site.

The new woodland will naturally help reduce water run-off. Trees and their roots improve soil health by reducing compaction and allowing the ground to absorb and hold more water. Tree canopies also intercept rainfall and slow the movement of water across the land, helping to reduce surface flow.

20. Proposed wet woodland areas maybe too dry with current land drainage in place - remove unnecessary land drains to encourage wetland habitats

We are reviewing whether any existing land drains are present on the site and will consider removing those that are no longer needed, where this would help support wetter habitats.

21. Consider other water management systems such as water meadows or beaver dams

This woodland project is funded by the government's Trees Programme, specifically to deliver woodland creation. As a result, measures such as creating water meadows or introducing beavers fall outside the scope of funding. However, woodland creation can help prepare landscapes by improving habitat connectivity and water resilience, making future nature based solutions, such as beavers, more viable.

Appendices

Appendix A: Our response to key themes from early engagement

A new woodland in Smarden - our response to key themes from early engagement

We recently asked local people for their early views on plans to create a new woodland on land in Smarden in Kent. Here are our responses to the key themes and questions raised:

Public access

The new woodland will be called New Luckhurst Wood, will be open for local people to enjoy as a quiet, natural space. Once it is established, we will dedicate it under the Countryside and Rights of Way Act so people can explore the site.

The new woodland can be reached using the existing Public Right of Way from the village, and the entrances already in place. Once there, a network of new grass paths will make it easy for people to explore the new woodland and for us to look after the site. Other than two new forest tracks needed for our forestry vehicles, we're not planning any additional surfaced trails or facilities for cycling or horse-riding.

Dogs will be welcome, but the woodland will not be fully fenced. We expect all dog owners to act responsibly and keep their pets in sight and close by at all times in the new woodland, following our Forest Dog Code¹. At New Luckhurst, due to the potential presence of otters, dogs should be kept on leads in the areas near the ponds.

Traffic and parking

The new woodland will be easy to reach on foot using local footpaths and lanes and we're not planning any visitor or recreational facilities. We therefore won't be providing public parking. This will help keep local roads quieter and free from extra traffic.

Our forestry vehicles need to be able to access the new woodland from the road so they can manage and maintain the site. We plan to use two existing access points on Bethersden Road, both supported by new forest tracks. We will include barriers at these entrances to prevent unauthorised vehicle access and reduce the risk of antisocial behaviour.

Design, wildlife and views

The new mixed woodland will enrich the landscape by boosting biodiversity and enhancing the natural environment. As part of our planning, we conducted surveys to tell us more about the plants, wildlife, and soil. These surveys, along with a landscape and visual appraisal and feedback from local people have shaped our draft designs.

We have planned the woodland layout to respect views from neighbouring properties and the existing Public Rights of Way. Some open views will remain, complemented by nearby shrubs and small native broadleaf trees, with mixed woodland further back. New grass paths, open spaces, and a native hedgerow along the northern boundary will provide privacy for neighbouring properties while creating diverse habitats for wildlife. These features will support local biodiversity, encourage species such as butterflies, and improve connectivity for wildlife moving through the landscape.

The trees we will plant

We are using years of experience and the latest scientific evidence to choose the right trees to plant in 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 will be a mix of broadleaf and conifer, often planted together in mixtures, with groups of shrub species along edges to increase the variety, structure, 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.

Species at New Luckhurst might include alder, willow, aspen, oak, hornbeam, lime, walnut, wild service tree, red oak, black poplar, Douglas fir, sweet chestnut and wild cherry. Shrubs could include field maple, hawthorn, hazel, and dogwood.

Establishing and managing the new woodland

We aim to plant the new woodland in winter 26/27. Maintenance during the first five years is especially important to ensure the woodland's long-term success. The woodland will be managed by the Forestry England team and our contractors.

Longer term, Forestry England 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 to provide a sustainable supply of timber and help the woodland to continue to grow healthily for many years to come.

Protecting the new woodland from deer

The UK is home to six species of deer. As their natural predators (bears, lynx and wolves) are no longer present in the UK, our wildlife management team have to manage the deer populations. Without predators or management, deer populations become unnaturally large, and their browsing can damage or kill young trees and wildlife habitats, reducing the resilience of the new woodland to the effects of climate change and lowering the carbon captured from the atmosphere.

We will use deer fencing to protect larger blocks of new planting and tree tubes in smaller areas. Rabbit and deer fencing will protect young trees from browsing, while tree tubes will safeguard smaller, widely spaced areas. After the woodland has become established, deer fencing and tree tubes will be removed and recycled where possible. This usually happens after approximately 10 years.

Forestry England is part of the Deer Initiative², a partnership that promotes sustainable deer management in England and Wales. Our highly skilled wildlife management team will safely and humanely control deer populations in our woodlands, working to the highest standards. More information about how Forestry England manage deer can be found on our website.

Why are you planting agricultural land?

We understand concerns around food security, and we want to keep the best-quality land in agricultural production. This is why we do not create woodlands on the most productive land (grades 1 & 2). The land at New Luckhurst Wood is graded at 3 and has not been found to be of agricultural quality.

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. The new woodland will capture carbon, connect existing woodland habitats for wildlife to move between, and provide a sustainable source of timber, which is crucial for the UK's green economy.

References:

- 1 <https://www.forestryengland.uk/dog-code>
- 2 <http://www.thedeerinitiative.co.uk>
- 3 <https://www.forestryengland.uk/article/managing-deer-the-nations-forests>

Appendix B: Consultation information



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

We are working on designs for a new woodland in Smarden, near Ashford in Kent, which will be known as New Luckhurst Wood. We would like your comments on our initial ideas. Your feedback will help shape our final designs.

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.

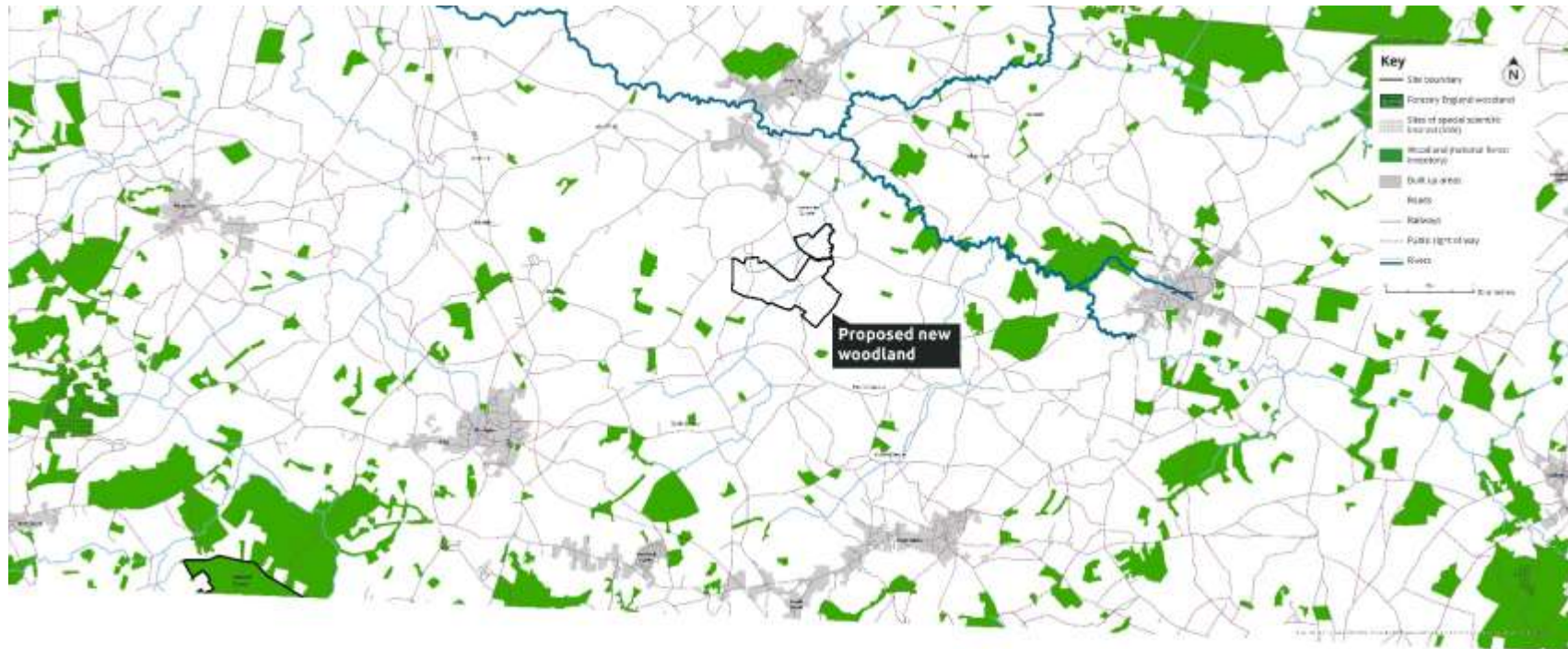
In time, each new woodland will provide sustainable timber, contributing to a green economy and they'll have wider environmental benefits including absorbing carbon, improving soil health and air quality, and water management.

Forestry England is creating these woodlands through the government's Nature for Climate Fund.

Scan the QR code to find out more:

forestryengland.uk



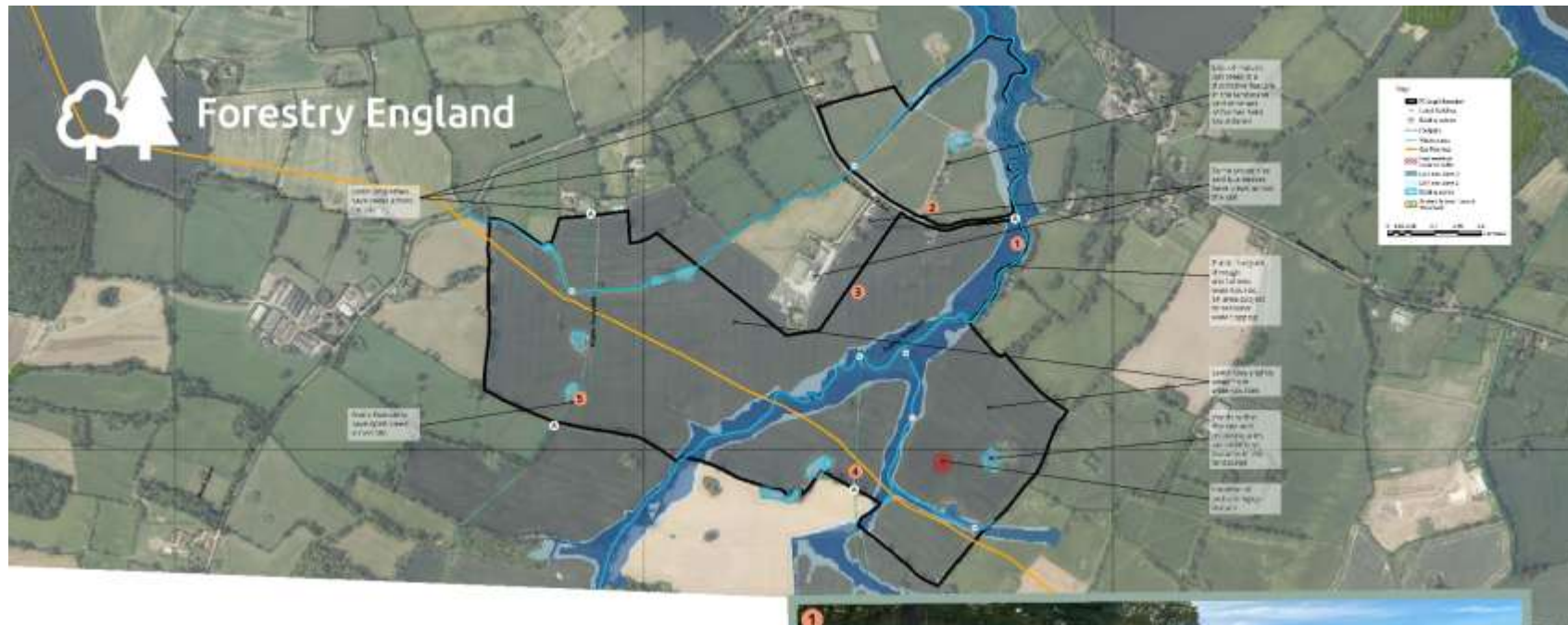


Site location & landscape context

The proposed new woodland in Smarden is within Natural England's National Character Area (NCA) 121 Low Weald. It is a low-lying clay vale which has a landscape characterised as being wet and woody. It is dissected by flood plains, and its impermeable clay soil and low-lying nature make many areas prone to localised flooding, with ponds a common feature. The Low Weald remains essentially rural in character with small-scale villages nestled in woodland. The area boasts an intricate mix of woodlands, much of it ancient, including extensive broadleaved oak over hazel and hornbeam coppice, shaws, small field copses and tree groups, and lines of riparian trees along watercourses. Veteran trees are a feature of hedgerows and in fields. There are many small rivers, streams and watercourses with associated watermeadows and wet woodland. (Natural England, 2013)

The proposed new woodland is approximately 7 miles from land Forestry England manages at Hemsted Forest and 15 miles from Bedgebury National Pinetum and Forest.





The existing site

The site in Smarden sits in a gently rolling, low lying landscape, rising from around 25 metres in the northeast to about 30 metres in the west. It is divided into two areas: the smaller parcel lies north of Bethersden Road, and the larger parcel sits to the south. Ponds, watercourses and ditches are characteristic features throughout the area. On the larger southern parcel, two ponds on the western side are linked by a public footpath that runs north to south. Another public footpath crosses the eastern side of the site, following the watercourse for part of its route from the access point on Bethersden Road before continuing south. Both parcels were previously used as arable farmland, divided into a patchwork of small and medium sized fields. Internal boundaries are marked by ditches, and traces of historic enclosure patterns remain, where mature trees survive, most noticeably on the land north of Bethersden Road. A number of properties on Pook Lane and Bethersden Road have views over the site.

- 1: Wide view south over site from public footpath next to watercourse, near Bethersden Road.
- 2: View north into smaller site from field access point on Bethersden Road.
- 3: View southeast from boundary with Enterprise Park.
- 4: View north along public footpath towards Enterprise Park and Bethersden Road.
- 5: View north from public footpath next to a pond within site.





How the new woodland could look

Our initial designs include proposals to:

- Plant coniferous and broadleaved trees together, with shrub species along some edges. This will add variety, colour and texture in the landscape.
- Create circular grass routes for woodland management and public access, linking them to existing rights of way that connect with the surrounding landscape and the village of Smarden.
- Create wildlife corridors by leaving open space next to hedgerows, ditches, and pipelines and adding some shrub planting at the edges of woodland for wildlife to thrive.
- Include a mix of open space, native shrubs and trees at low density to keep some open views from nearby properties. This will also make the area look interesting throughout the year.





A new woodland in Smarden - our response to key themes from early engagement

We recently asked local people for their early views on plans to create a new woodland on land in Smarden in Kent. Here are our responses to the key themes and questions raised:

Public access

The new woodland will be called New Luckhurst Wood, will be open for local people to enjoy as a quiet, natural space. Once it is established, we will dedicate it under the Countryside and Rights of Way Act so people can explore the site.

The new woodland can be reached using the existing Public Right of Way from the village and the entrances already in place. Once there, a network of new grass paths will make it easy for people to explore the new woodland and for us to look after the site. Other than two new forest tracks needed for our forestry vehicles, we're not planning any additional surfaced trails or facilities for cycling or horse-riding.

Dogs will be welcome, but the woodland will not be fully fenced. We expect all dog owners to act responsibly and keep their pets in sight and close by at all times in the new woodland, following our Forest Dog Code¹. At New Luckhurst, due to the potential presence of otters, dogs should be kept on leads in the areas near the ponds.

Traffic and parking

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Design, wildlife and views

The new mixed woodland will enrich the landscape by boosting biodiversity and enhancing the natural environment. As part of our planning, we conducted surveys to tell us more about the plants, wildlife, and soil. These surveys, along with a landscape and visual appraisal and feedback from local people have shaped our draft designs.

We have planned the woodland layout to respect views from neighbouring properties and the existing Public Rights of Way. Some open views will remain, complemented by nearby shrubs and small native broadleaf trees, with mixed woodland further back. New grass paths, open spaces, and a native hedgerow along the northern boundary will provide privacy for neighbouring properties while creating diverse habitats for wildlife. These features will support local biodiversity, encourage species such as butterflies, and improve connectivity for wildlife moving through the landscape.

The trees we will plant

We are using years of experience and the latest scientific evidence to choose the right trees to plant in 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 will be a mix of broadleaf and conifer, often planted together in mixtures, with groups of shrub species along edges to increase the variety, structure 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.

Species at New Luckhurst might include alder, willow, aspen, oak, hornbeam, lime, walnut, wild service tree, red oak, black poplar, Douglas fir, sweet chestnut and wild cherry. Shrubs could include field maple, hawthorn, hazel, and dogwood.

Establishing and managing the new woodland

We aim to plant the new woodland in winter 2021. Maintenance during the first five years is especially important to ensure the woodland's long term success. The woodland will be managed by the Forestry England team and our contractors.

Longer term, Forestry England 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 to provide a sustainable supply of timber and help the woodland to continue to grow healthily for many years to come.

Protecting the new woodland from deer

The UK is home to six species of deer. As their natural predators (beavers, lynx and wolves) are no longer present in the UK, our wildlife management team have to manage the deer populations. Without predators or management, deer populations become unnaturally large, and their browsing can damage or kill young trees and wildlife habitats, reducing the resilience of the new woodland to the effects of climate change and lowering the carbon captured from the atmosphere.

We will use deer fencing to protect larger blocks of new planting and tree tubes in smaller areas. Rabbit and deer fencing will protect young trees from browsing, while tree tubes will safeguard smaller, widely spaced areas. After the woodland has become established, deer fencing and tree tubes will be removed and recycled where possible. This usually happens after approximately 10 years.

Forestry England is part of the Deer Initiative², a partnership that promotes sustainable deer management in England and Wales. Our highly skilled wildlife management team will safely and humanely control deer populations in our woodlands, working to the highest standards. More information about how Forestry England manage deer can be found on our website³.

Why are you planting agricultural land?

We understand concerns around food security, and we want to keep the best quality land in agricultural production. This is why we do not create woodlands on the most productive land (grades 1 & 2). The land at New Luckhurst Wood is graded at 3 and has not been found to be of agricultural quality.

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. The new woodland will capture carbon, connect existing woodland habitats for wildlife to move between, and provide a sustainable source of timber, which is crucial for the UK's green economy.

References

¹ <https://www.forestryengland.uk/dog-code>

² <http://www.thedeerinitiative.co.uk/>

³ <https://www.forestryengland.uk/article/managing-deer-the-nations-forests>



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://bit.ly/newluckhurstw>
- If you are unable to do this, you can respond via email at woodland.creation@forestryengland.uk

All views should be received by 11.59pm on Sunday 8th March 2026

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
- Planting (Winter 2026/27)

Scan the QR code
to find out more:

forestryengland.uk





New woodland in Smarden

**Come along to our public
consultation event**

Thursday 26 February 4:00pm - 7:00pm
Smarden Charter Hall, Chessenden Lane,
Smarden, TN27 8NF

Forestry England is planning to create a new woodland
called New Luckhurst Wood, in Smarden, Kent.

Please drop-in at our local consultation event to view our
proposed designs and speak to members of our team. You
can also share your views with us online by scanning the
QR code or visiting <https://bit.ly/newluckhurstw>



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

forestryengland.uk

New woodland: New Luckhurst Wood



Growing the nation's forests

At Forestry England, we're expertly creating a new woodland on land we have purchased in the village of Smearden in Kent. New Luckhurst Wood will provide valuable habitat for wildlife and absorb carbon. Once the trees have grown, the woodland will be open to the public, giving local people a new green space to explore and enjoy. In a few decades, it will also become a source of sustainable British timber.

We'll carefully select tree species that suit the local soil and will thrive in today's climate, while also being resilient to future conditions as the trees grow and mature. The woodland will include a mix of broadleaf and conifer trees and include open areas to support nature and add visual interest to the landscape.

New Luckhurst is one of many new woodlands we're creating at Forestry England to help grow the nation's forests. The work has been made possible thanks to the government's Nature for Climate Fund programme.



Work in progress...

At the moment, we're still developing our plans for New Luckhurst Wood. We recently hosted a public consultation, where we invited local people and businesses to share their thoughts and ideas with us. This included a special 'drop in' event in Smearden. We'd like to thank everyone who got involved in this process and who attended our event, as your feedback will help us shape the final design for New Luckhurst Wood.

Right now, we're working through the comments from the public consultation, and we'll be sharing our final design for New Luckhurst Wood later this year. Subject to the approval of our final design plans, we hope to begin planting the first trees at the new woodland in winter 2022/23.

Trees we're planning to plant

For every new woodland we create, we aim to plant a mix of species that complement the surrounding landscape, support a range of wildlife species, and, in time, contribute to the UK's sustainable timber industry. Tree species we're planning to plant at New Luckhurst Wood include:

- Willow
- Aspen
- Oak
- Hornbeam

We will also be looking to plant native shrubs in those open areas, which could include hazel, hawthorn, dogwood, and wild cherry.

[Learn more about tree species >](#)





Photos of the consultation event set up at Smarden Village Hall

Appendix C : Consultation questionnaire



A proposed new woodland in Smarden

Overview

Forestry England would like to share with you our proposed plans for New Luckhurst Wood, the new woodland we are planning to create in Smarden.

Why your views matter

Your feedback, as well as site surveys, will help shape what the new woodland could look like. Forestry England value your comments and feedback and welcome you to our consultation event.

Introduction

Thank you for taking part in this consultation on the design proposals for New Luckhurst Wood

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: Example letters/emails announcing the launch of the consultation

Sent: 09 February 2026 18:06
Subject: Public consultation on draft designs for a new woodland in Smarden, Kent

Dear Parish Council

We recently contacted you about our early engagement on plans for a new woodland at Smarden. I am contacting you today as we have now 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 8th March at: <https://consult.forestryengland.uk/forest-districts/nluckhurstw>.

Promoting the consultation

I attach a PDF copy of a poster promoting the consultation and the drop-in event and would be grateful if you could include this on your website or notice boards where available. I have also included below, 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, 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

The Woodland Creation Team

Forestry England

Email:

woodland.creation@forestryengland.uk

Website: www.forestryengland.uk

More information about New Luckhurst Wood: [New Luckhurst Wood | Forestry England](#)



Dear neighbour,

Public consultation on design proposals for a new woodland in Smarden, Kent

Thank you for your interest in New Luckhurst Wood, the new woodland we are planning to create on land in Smarden, Kent.

We are contacting you as we have today launched a public consultation on our draft design proposals for the new woodland.

These are available to view and comment upon **until midnight on Sunday the 8th March at :**

<https://consult.forestryengland.uk/forest-districts/nluckhurstw>

While we continue with our detailed planning for New Luckhurst Wood, we are keen to hear your views on our initial designs. These have been informed by site surveys as well as valuable insights gained from you and other local people last year. This new woodland is one of many we're creating across the UK to grow the nation's forests. It will become a valuable habitat for wildlife and an important carbon store. In time, it will also provide a source of sustainable timber and become a new green space for you to explore and enjoy.

Public drop-in event

As part of the consultation, we will also be holding a drop-in event where you can view our initial designs for the new woodland and talk to members of the Forestry England team. This will be held at **Smarden Charter Hall, Chessenden Lane, Smarden, TN27 8NF on Thursday 26th February from 4pm – 7pm** . Please do come along to find out more and ask any questions you may have.

Responding to the consultation

We encourage you to submit your response online. You can view our plans and submit your views here: <https://consult.forestryengland.uk/forest-districts/nluckhurstw>. If you are unable to do this, you can respond via email, typing 'New Luckhurst Wood Consultation' in the subject line of your email and including your name, address, and postcode in your response.

Next steps

The consultation will close at **11.59 on Sunday 8th March**. All responses will then 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 for regulatory review ahead of planting the new woodland. We will update our website as our plans for the new woodland progress. You can see the latest information here: www.forestryengland.uk/woodland-creation-new-luckhurst

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

We look forward to receiving your comments.

Kind regards

The Woodland Creation Team

Forestry England

Email:

woodland.creation@forestryengland.uk

Website: www.forestryengland.uk

More information about New Luckhurst Wood: [New Luckhurst Wood | Forestry England](#)



Appendix E: Code frame - comments by theme

Theme	Comment
Fencing, gates and styles	Fencing the whole site may be more effective than relying on individual tree guards.
Fencing, gates and styles	Include horse styles to stop motorised vehicle access
Footpaths and access	Reroute the footpath north of Bethersden Road to the opposite side of the brook, giving more direct access from Smarden to the smaller northern woodland parcel.
Footpaths and access	Is there an access point for the land north of the Bethersden Road?
Footpaths and access	Public rights of way have been acknowledged and catered for in the plans and no objections to proposals
Footpaths and access	PROW guidelines on maintaining the alignment of the legally recorded definitive line
General positive comments	General positive
Horse-riding, cyclists and dogs	Provide a space for dog walkers
Horse-riding, cyclists and dogs	Allow access for horseboxes
Horse-riding, cyclists and dogs	Link the nearby bridleway AT168 should the woodland be extended in the future
Horse-riding, cyclists and dogs	Increasing off road access for equestrian will support KCC project Zero
Horse-riding, cyclists and dogs	Provide a horse riding loop connecting to Bethersden Road
Horse-riding, cyclists and dogs	Provide a space for horse-riders
Horse-riding, cyclists and dogs	Area increasingly dangerous for horse-riding on roads
Horse-riding, cyclists and dogs	Include cycle and bridle paths
Horse-riding, cyclists and dogs	People with disabilities would be able to access the woodland on a horse
Nature conservation and wildlife	Use an understanding of geomorphology and hydrology to manage the site more effectively for nature conservation. For example, use woody material or plant trees along the stream to help restore stream habitat.

Nature conservation and wildlife	How does the proposal link with the Local Nature Recovery Strategy
Other	Why is it called New Luckhurst Wood
Trees and planting	Including sweet chestnut and Douglas fir does not follow local landscape character guidance or current best-practice conservation advice.
Trees and planting	Provide more information about ground preparation relating to the understory of the woodland
Trees and planting	Proposed wet woodland areas maybe too dry with current land drainage in place
Water and flood management	The central watercourse passing through the site is managed by the Upper Medway Internal Drainage Board - any addition of new culverts will require IDB consent. Any watercourses outside of IDB jurisdiction will require land drainage consent through Kent County Council.
Water and flood management	Agree with proposed buffers around watercourses with wet woodland planting
Water and flood management	Provide further information about the proposals so advice can be given on flood risk requirements and whether a Flood Risk Activity Permit is needed under the Environmental Permitting Regulations 2016.
Water and flood management	Consult the Upper Medway Internal Drainage Board and the local flood authority
Water and flood management	No objections in principle from a flood risk perspective
Water and flood management	Work in partnership with other organisations (for example, the South East Rivers Trust or other groups) and with local landowners to help deliver biodiversity gain.
Water and flood management	Provide more information about soil condition and any proposed measures to reduce runoff, restore soil health, improve water storage, and introduce 'slow the flow' measures on or near the site.
Water and flood management	Remove unnecessary land drains to encourage wetland habitats
Water and flood management	Use of a range of flood management techniques
	Confirm if the proposed works are likely to be within 8 metres of board maintained watercourse - there should be no obstructions within 8 metres of a board maintained watercourse without previous consent of the IDB
Water and flood management	Consider other water management systems - such as water meadows or beaver dams
Woodland design	Keep as a woodland - not a playground
Trees and planting	increase open space within the planting plan to mitigate the impact on farm land birds
Trees and planting	Reduce tree planting on the south side of each of the ponds to allow light to reach them
Trees and planting	Consider the inclusion of native broadleaf species close to the watercourse in some areas of the riparian woodland buffers

Appendix F: Stakeholders contacted

Ashford Borough Council
<p>Elected representatives</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • District Ward Councillors - Weald North; Weald Central; and Biddenden Wards <p>Officers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conservation and Ecology - strategic nature recovery and woodland policy • Planning • Local Authority Tree Officers • Private Water Supplies
Kent County Council:
<p>Elected representatives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • County Ward Councillor - Ashford Rural West <p>Officers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Senior Archaeological Officer • Public Rights of Way • Highways • Flood Department • Local Nature Recovery Lead
Parish Councils
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Biddenden Parish Council • High Haldon Parish Council • Smarden Parish Council
Other
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Environment Agency • Historic England • Kent Downs National Landscape • Kent Local Access Forum • Natural England
Wildlife Groups
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bat Conservation • Butterfly Conservation • Kent Friends of the trees • Kent Wildlife Trust
Special Interest Groups
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • British Horse Society • National Farmers Union
Utilities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Upper Medway Internal Drainage Board • SGN (gas pipe)

