



Forestry England

Growing the nation's forests

A proposed new woodland at Picklescott, Shropshire Hills

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

We are planning a new woodland at Picklescott, Shropshire. We would like your comments and feedback on our initial ideas. Your input 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.

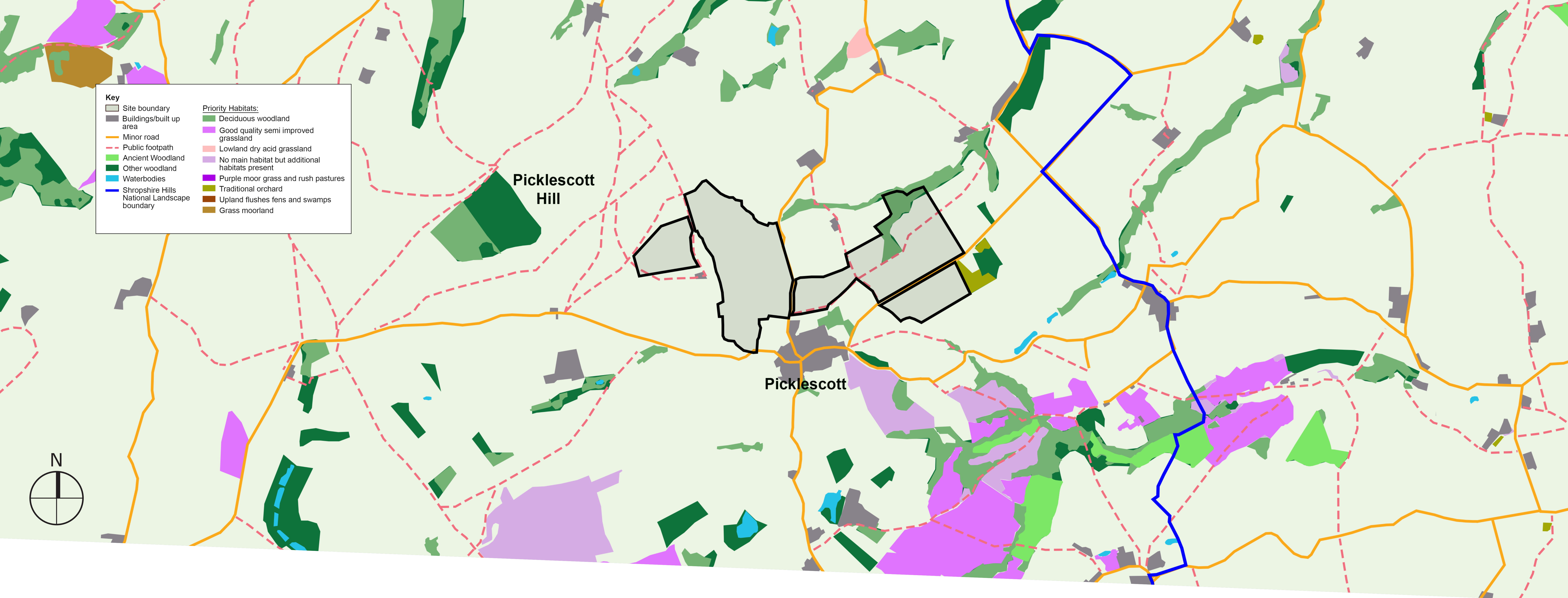
In time, each new woodland will provide sustainable timber, contributing to a rural economy. And they'll have wider environmental benefits including absorbing carbon, improving soil health and air quality, and combating flooding.

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

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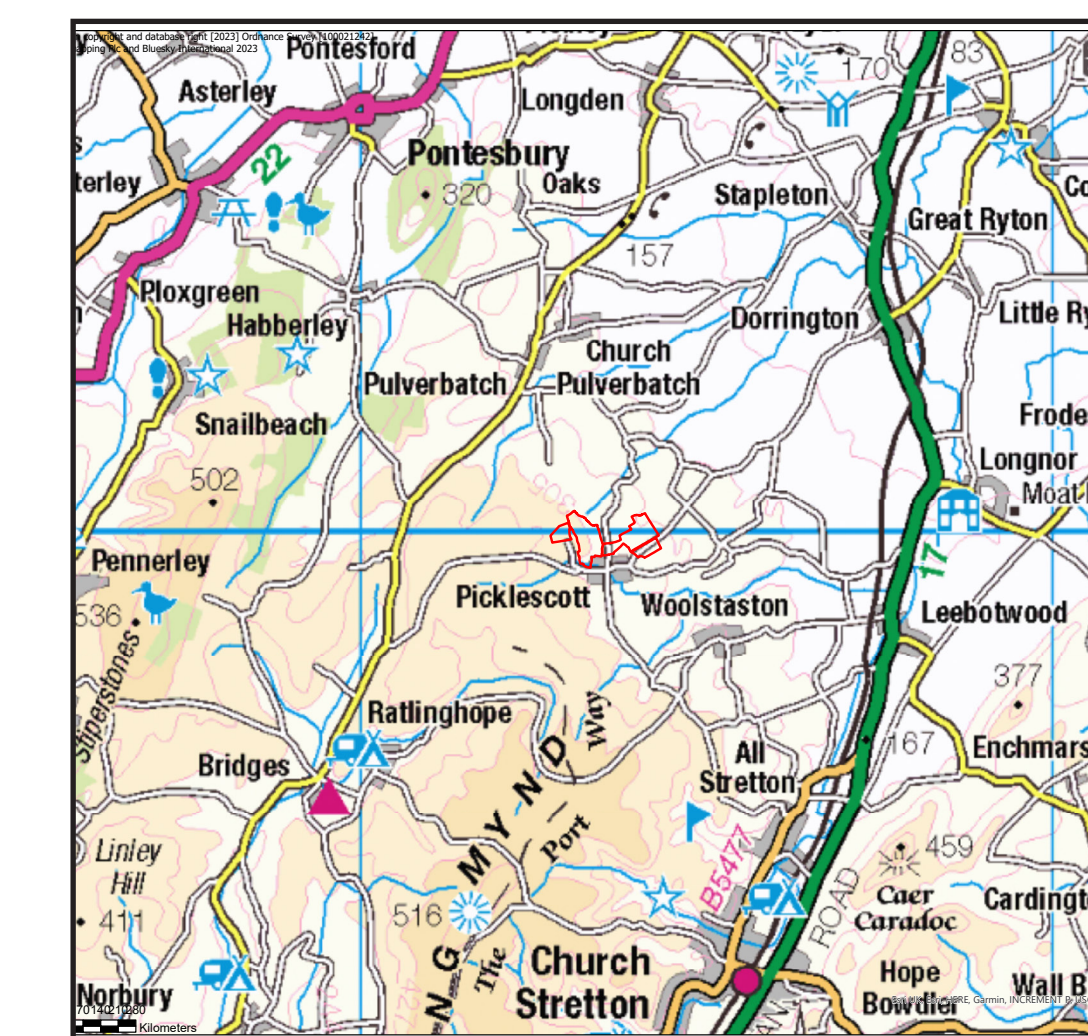
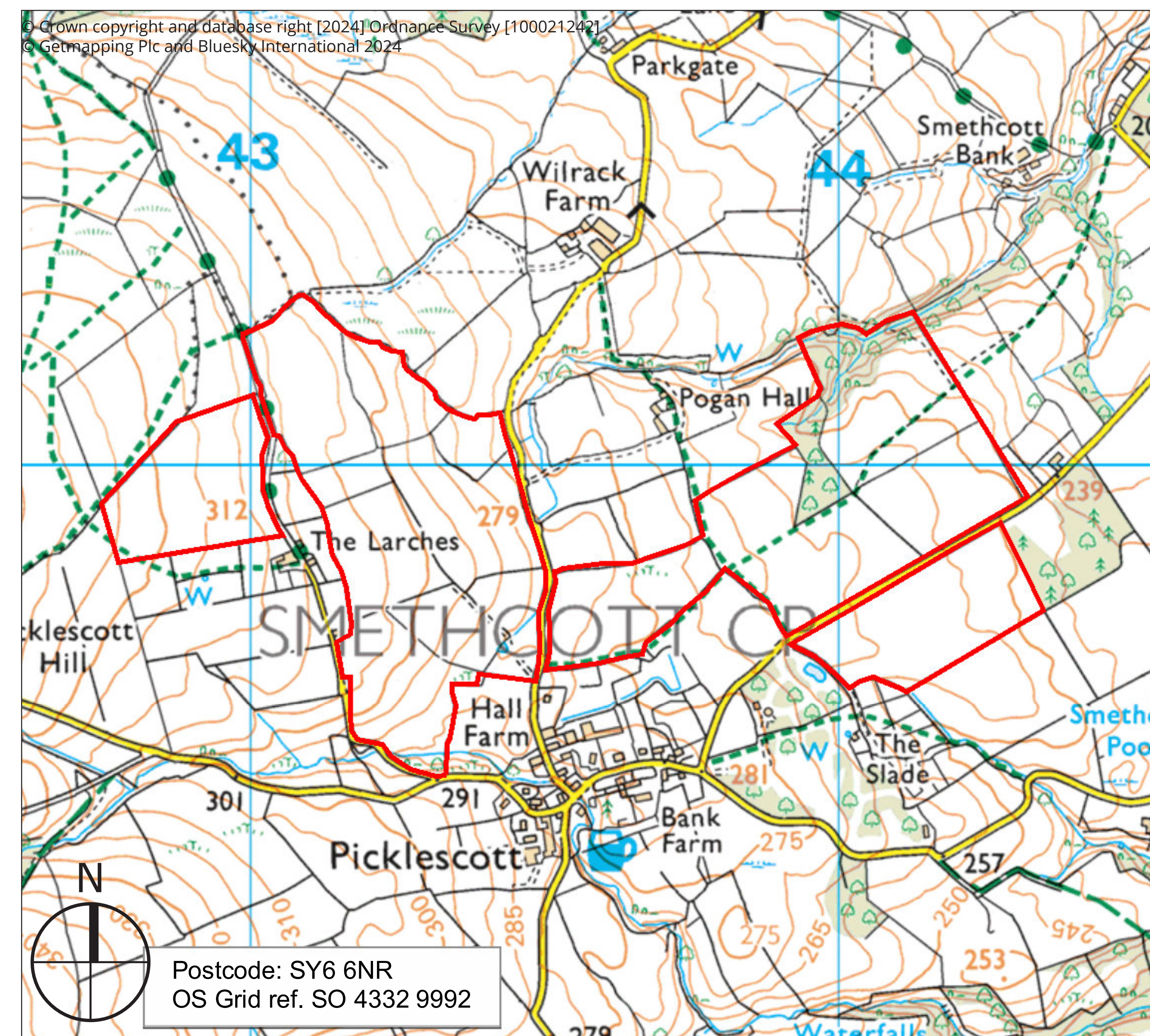


Site Location & Wider Context

The proposed new woodland is in the northern part of the Shropshire Hills National Landscape, just within the designation's boundary. The site is approximately 10 miles south of Shrewsbury, directly north of the village of Picklescott.

The site for the proposed woodland lies within Natural England's National Character Area (NCA) 65 Shropshire Hills. The landscape is rugged with mostly bare-topped hills contrasting with mixed agriculture in intervening valleys and dales. The Shropshire Hills are characterised most strongly by a series of relatively wild hills and ridges that lend the area its name. The Stiperstones National Nature Reserve rises to 536m, 4 miles to the west of the site and the moorland plateau of the Lond Mynd lies 2.5 miles to the south.

The landscape at Picklescott 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.





A Coronation Wood at Picklescott - 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 Picklescott. Here are our responses to the key themes and questions people raised.

Public access

The new woodland at Picklescott 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 running through the site, and new unsurfaced grass paths will give walkers access to much of the new wood and link it to the wider countryside. Our draft design includes open spaces and glades that would provide peaceful picnic spots. We are not proposing to create new surfaced trails or specific infrastructure for horse-riding or cycling.

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.

Traffic and parking

The new woodland has been designed for local people to enjoy the site and we are mindful of not significantly increasing car traffic, particularly as the roads in the area are narrow. Our proposals therefore do not include public parking. We will consider signs in appropriate locations to discourage parking should this be necessary.

So we can manage and maintain the new woodland, we need access from the road for our forestry vehicles. We plan to use existing access points and to create one new access point with 150m of forest road, to manage the site (see draft design plan). It will be about 20-25 years before any timber can be harvested from the site. Transport routes for the sustainable timber will be agreed with the local highways authority as required.

Design

Our draft design has considered the existing field pattern, the wider landscape character and how close the new woodland is to nearby properties. We will keep the existing deciduous woodland and watercourses and plant native broadleaf trees next to them. The design links the existing deciduous woodland on the site to the woodland east of Picklescott. In the eastern part of the site and along the southern edge, there are two public footpaths. We have focussed our broadleaf and mixed woodland planting in this area and created an additional grass path. This provides an attractive backdrop to the village.

In the western part of the site, we will focus more on producing timber. We will plant a mix of conifer trees along with some oak and sycamore. The edges of the woodland have been carefully designed to reduce visual impact and create habitats for wildlife.

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. Trees will be planted away from the hedgerows and shrubs will be planted along the edges of the woodland blocks providing additional space for hedgerows to thrive, which will benefit biodiversity such as butterflies.

We are doing ecology surveys to tell us more about the plants, wildlife and ecosystem at Picklescott. This will help shape our final design for the new woodland.

We have used our experience to design the woodland to discourage antisocial behaviour where we can, such as minimising secluded areas and improving visibility. Regular maintenance activities can discourage vandalism and littering, as will regular use by the local community. If we get reports of anti-social behaviour, we monitor them to assess ways of preventing or minimising them.

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

- Create mixed productive and resilient woodland that delivers benefits for people, nature and the economy
- Improve woodland connectivity in the landscape
- Provide additional opportunities for informal access to the countryside
- Sequester atmospheric carbon, supporting wider commitments in achieving net zero emissions targets
- Establish research trials to understand how our broadleaf trees grow and store carbon in a changing climate

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.

All the trees planted on the site will be UK grown.

The species will be a mix of broadleaf and conifer, planted together in mixtures, with shrub species along edges to increase the variety and provide seasonal colour and texture. Species have been chosen to produce a future source of sustainable softwood 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.

We propose to plant a range of species at Picklescott, including spruces, pines, silver fir and coast redwood and native broadleaves such as oak, hornbeam, silver birch, rowan, wych elm, common alder and hazel. A mix of broadleaves, native shrubs and naturalised conifers will complement the local landscape, provide seasonal colour and increase resilience.

Landscape and Views

We will design our woodland carefully to maintain the views into the surrounding countryside. Where there are key views from properties or public footpaths, 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 views towards The Lawley, Caer Cradoc and the Wrekin are important from Picklescott. Where possible, our design will frame and enhance existing views and we will establish open spaces between the new woodland and key viewpoints.

Establishing the new 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 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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What research trials are you planning?

Climate change and the increase in tree pests and diseases means we must diversify forests to make them more resilient. One way to do this is by planting a wider variety of tree species. Planting a mix of trees, rather than a single type, is preferred to avoid monocultures. We also need to work out which species will thrive in the future. At Picklescott, we are experimenting in small areas of the new woodland with broadleaved species that haven't been widely planted in the UK before, will thrive in a changing climate and produce a sustainable supply of timber.

We will be trialling 15 broadleaf species, planted in three small plots, and randomly spaced. Once established, further research will focus on forestry management techniques to ensure healthy growth in the long term with the aim of creating a sustainable supply of timber for the construction and furniture industries.

Protecting the new woodland from deer and rabbits

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 no longer present in the UK. 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](#)¹, a partnership that promotes sustainable deer management in England and Wales. We will use deer fencing to protect larger 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 manage deer can be found [here](#)².

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

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.

Currently the UK imports over 80% of its timber³ and we are more reliant on imported timber than imported food (40% of food is imported)⁴. 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 Picklescott is graded at 3 and 4. All landowners choose how they should best manage their land to suit their business.

Will the woodland capture more carbon than grassland?

As they grow, trees capture more carbon and more quickly than grass.

The soils of permanent pasture may have more carbon stored away than woodland soils, particularly of young woodland, but these stores have taken a long time to build up.

Woodland is considered a permanent land use change in the UK, so even when productive forests are felled, trees will be replanted and their carbon stocks will build up again over the following decades.

Sustainable home-grown timber can store carbon for many years while in use and also avoid fossil fuel emissions from products it replaces such as concrete.

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¹ <https://www.thedeerinitiative.co.uk/>
² <https://www.forestryengland.uk/article/managing-deer-the-nations-forests>
³ <https://cdn.forestryresearch.gov.uk/2023/09/Forestry-Facts-Figures-2023.pdf>
⁴ <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/united-kingdom-food-security-report-2021/united-kingdom-food-security-report-2021-theme-2-uk-food-supply-sources#:~:text=Therefore%2C%20the%20UK%20does%20not,other%20sources%20can%20meet%20demand>



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/picklescott-consult>

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

- woodland.creation@forestryengland.uk

All views should be received by Sunday 11th August

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)

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