



Forestry England

Quoditch Wood

Consultation report
and our response to
issues raised

August 2024



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1. Executive summary

Between 8 July and 28 July 2024, we held a consultation on proposals for the designs of a new woodland at Quoditch. The new woodland is in northwest Devon, next to the hamlet of Quoditch and 5.5 miles from Holsworthy. The woodland will be open to the public and provide a quiet space for people to enjoy alongside thriving wildlife and sustainably grown timber.

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 14 responses to the consultation, including responses from residents and stakeholders. The majority of the feedback was 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 propose to include a scrape in the Southwest of the site, subject to checking the land to ensure the location is suitable. This is a small shallow area that would temporarily hold water and benefit various wildlife species, particularly birds, amphibians and invertebrates.
- We have made changes to the designs to retain existing views across the landscape.
- We've increased the proportion of broadleaves in some areas to bring additional variety, colour and texture.

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 Quoditch in Devon. The land was previously used for grazing 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.

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 April 2024, we wrote to neighbours at 18 addresses close to the site for the new woodland.

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 Quoditch. We also wrote to Ashwater Parish Council. The letter included a map showing the boundary of the new site and invited responses via an online survey. We also invited direct neighbours to the site to get in touch with us by email so we could introduce ourselves and discuss the process of new woodland creation in more detail.

We received 10 responses to the early engagement, including a response from Ashwater Parish Council. Additionally, we had telephone or face to face discussions with the owners or occupiers of 3 neighbouring properties.

The feedback, together with further design and survey work and engagement with stakeholders, has helped to shape the design proposals we presented in the July 2024 public consultation.

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

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

- Suggestions for the main entrance and access to the new woodland
- Concerns about an increase in parking in the local narrow lanes and an increase in local traffic
- Views and neighbouring properties
- Tree species and choices - avoid planting dense woodland, include a mix of hardwoods, native and broadleaved trees
- Woodland design suggestions included not planting too close to neighbouring properties to preserve natural light and refers to the West Devon Forest Plan
- Involve local schools in planting and ecological studies
- Questions about woodland management and timber harvesting

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

2.5 Public consultation - who we consulted

We invited local people who responded to our initial early engagement survey, as well as representatives from Devon County Council, Torridge District Council, County and District Ward Councillors and the MP for Torridge & Tavistock Constituency. We also contacted Ashwater Parish Council.

Other stakeholders we advised of the consultation included the Devon Wildlife Trust, Natural England and the Environment Agency.

A list of stakeholders we contacted are listed in **Appendix F**. Stakeholder responses are summarised in **Section 3.4** of this document.

2.6 Dates and duration

The public consultation was open for 3 weeks from 8 July to midnight on the 28 July 2024.

2.7 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.

2.8 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/quoditch-consult/>
- Email at: Woodland.creation@forestryengland.uk (where responding via the survey was not possible).
- Leaving comments or suggestions at the public information event held on Monday 22nd July between 4pm - 7pm at Ashwater Parish Hall, Ashwater, EX21 5EZ. (These have been summarised separately in **Section 3.3** of this report).
- Completing a paper survey at the public information event.

2.9 Overview of consultation responses

We received 14 responses to the consultation. 8 were submitted by completing the consultation online, and 6 were submitted by email or completed at the consultation drop in event. The responses were coded and categorised as either positive, negative/concerns, questions or suggestions.

2.10 Consultation materials and publicity

2.10.1 Consultation materials

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

- An overview of the new woodland creation programme and 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.

2.10.2 Consultation activity

We publicised the consultation in the following ways:

- **Media release:** Distributed to local news outlets.
- **News item and dedicated web page:** On the Forestry England website: [New woodland at Quoditch | Forestry England](#)
- **Emails:** Sent to over 20 people in the local area and stakeholders.
- **Posters:** Posters publicising the consultation were put up in public areas around Quoditch.
- **Consultation drop-in event:** We held a public information drop-in event on Monday 22nd July between 4pm - 7pm at Ashwater Parish Hall, Ashwater, EX21 5EZ. More than 35 people attended the event.

2.10.3 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 14 responses to the consultation: 8 via the online survey and 6 were submitted by email or by completing a feedback form at the consultation drop-in event.

We have summarised the comments into the following overarching themes:

Issue	Mentions
Parking and traffic	13
Access to the new woodland	9
Views	3
Tree species and planting	3
Flooding and water management	2
Community involvement	2
Birds, wildlife, and diversity	1

Comments discussed at the drop in event have been summarised separately in **Section 3.3** of this document.

3.1 Positive comments

General positive comments included:

- 1. Support for the new woodland:** Several responses expressed excitement and support for the creation of a new woodland, especially in commemoration of the Coronation of the King.
- 2. Biodiversity:** Positive remarks about the potential for biodiversity, including the introduction of wildflowers.
- 3. Environmental benefits:** The proposal is seen as beneficial for carbon sequestration, water quality improvement, and habitat enhancement. Mention of the benefit of woodland to improve water quality, flood risk, and water resources.

3.2 Key questions, suggestions and concerns

The key questions, suggestions and concerns from the consultation are listed below, starting with the ones mentioned the most.

- 1. Parking: Suggestions and concerns about the lack of a dedicated car park, fearing that visitors will park on narrow lanes and verges, causing congestion and noise.**

8 responses mentioned this as a specific concern, whilst 5 responses suggested the inclusion of a small car park as proposed signs to discourage parking may not be sufficient. In two cases obstructions or blocking access to property were mentioned.

- 2. Access to the new woodland: Concern about the accessibility of the site, particularly for wheelchairs, mobility scooters, horse riders and cyclists.**

5 responses mentioned concerns about accessibility to the new woodland, whilst 4 responses suggested improvements to paths and access. These included:

- Ensure access points are wide enough for horses to use the grass tracks
- Provide flat, surfaced paths for wheelchair and mobility scooter access
- Design gates to be suitable for disabled users (1.5m wide) and ensure paths are well-drained and surfaced
- Concern about access and parking behind a private garage
- Create circular walks connecting the northern and southern sections of the new woodland.

- 3. Views: Concern about the density and type of planting, particularly conifers, which might obstruct views and reduce light to nearby properties.**

3 responses raised this as a concern.

- 4. Tree species and planting: Suggestions to experiment with agroforestry and to increase the percentage of native species planted, include a mixture of soft and hard woods and ensure the stock is sourced and grown in the UK.**

3 responses suggested agroforestry and/or tree species.

- 5. Flooding and water management: Concern about existing issues with flooding off the fields and how the new woodland might impact water quality and pollution management.**

2 responses mentioned this as an issue or concern whilst also flagging the benefits the new woodland would bring to flooding and water management.

- 6. Community involvement: Suggestions to include the local community.**

Suggestions to include local schools to participate in tree planting, contributing to information boards and exploring ways to secure public access between the new woodland and neighbouring woodland areas, through community engagement and volunteering: 2 responses suggested community involvement and volunteering.

7. **Birds, wildlife and diversity:** Presence of special species in the area, including hummingbird hawk moths and nightjars, and suggested adding a small pond and seeding the area with wildflowers to help maintain biodiversity.

1 response

3.3 Feedback from the consultation drop in event

Over 35 people attended the public information drop in event held on Monday 22nd July between 4pm - 7pm at Ashwater Parish Hall, Ashwater, EX21 5EZ

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.

Key discussion points included:

- Suggestions for access to the new woodland from Prestacott
- Suggestions that hedges should be regularly maintained for nesting birds
- Concerns about dogs chasing livestock and suggestion to include boundary fencing
- Questions about deer and grey squirrel management as both are prevalent in the area
- Questions and concerns about species diversity and the proportion of coniferous planting
- Concerns about the loss of productive farmland
- Concerns that tall trees may affect views and light into properties
- Concerns about parking and traffic and suggestions to include a dedicated area for parking

Sticky notes posted on the exhibition boards reflected some of the comments above:

Comment	Mentions
<i>Concern about lack of parking/provide a car park/off road parking</i>	5
<i>Lack of public access points/include access via green lane near Prestacott</i>	2
<i>Concern about use of agricultural farmland and impact on food production</i>	1
<i>Concern about species diversity/proportion of conifer</i>	1
<i>Maintain roadside hedges regularly</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 propose to include a scrape in the Southwest of the site, subject to checking the land to ensure the location is suitable. This is a small shallow area that would temporarily hold water and benefit various wildlife species, particularly birds, amphibians and invertebrates.
- We have made changes to the designs to retain existing views across the landscape.
- We've increased the proportion of broadleaves in some areas to bring additional variety, colour and texture.

Appendix A: Our response to key issues raised - Quoditch

Traffic and car-parking		
1	Include a car park or off road parking and include signage to discourage parking on verges or in gateways.	While the new woodland will be publicly accessible, it has been designed for local people to enjoy and our initial proposals do not include public parking. Along with the majority of our woodlands we will have operational access points where there would be space for occasional parking.
Access to the new woodland		
2	Include access for horse and bike riders - include surfaced paths, gates that are wide enough for pushchairs and wheelchair users (a minimum of 1.5 metres)	The paths within the new woodland will be unsurfaced grass spaces for people to explore the new woodland. We have no plans to introduce surfaced paths or facilities for horse riding or cycling.
3	Will the site be fully fenced/contained to prevent people and dogs to access private property and land?	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 .
4	Provide an additional entrance to the woodland via Prestacott	Access points to the new woodland have been carefully considered to allow people to enjoy the new woodland and are included in the designs. We have no current plans on creating any additional access points in the design.
5	Create circular walks connecting the northern and southern section of the woodland	Unfortunately, this will not be possible as this would involve crossing land that is not owned by Forestry England.
Views and planting		
6	Concern about the density and type of planting, particularly conifers, which might obstruct views and reduce light to properties	We have made changes to the designs to retain existing views from properties. We have increased the proportion of broadleaf species in some areas of the woodland.

Tree species and planting		
7	Include agroforestry in the proposals	The objectives of this woodland have been carefully considered with our professional foresters and we don't intend on creating areas of agroforestry within the new woodland.
8	Increase the percentage of native species planted, a mixture of soft and hard woods and ensure stock is sourced and grown in the UK	<p>The woodland will have a mix of broadleaf and conifer trees with shrubs along the edges to add variety, colour and texture.</p> <p>Forestry England owned nurseries grow 7 million new trees every year to replant forests across England and create new areas of woodland. The majority of trees we plant are sourced and grown in the UK, but we occasionally purchase from other nurseries or source seeds which may originate outside of the UK. All the trees we use are required to have a plant healthy certificate to guarantee they're not carrying pests and diseases.</p>
Flooding and water management		
9	Concern about flood water running off the fields and affecting properties close by	Woodlands can help to alleviate flooding, improve soil infiltration and reduce or slow surface runoff. Specific areas of concern have been discussed with our foresters.
Community involvement and engagement		
10	Include the local community in tree planting and community volunteering	Forestry England works with many 'friends of' societies and community groups that help manage our woodlands. We will monitor site use and interest at Quoditch as part of our wider engagement plans across the district.
11	Include information boards	There will be signage at the entrances to the new woodland, but we don't plan to put up other signs within the woodland. We want visitors to enjoy the area's natural beauty and keep signage to a minimum.
Birds, wildlife and diversity		

12	Include a small pond to encourage species diversity	We propose to include a small scrape (subject to land checking). This is a small shallow area to hold water temporarily. It will benefit various wildlife species, particularly birds, amphibians and invertebrates.
13	Include programmes for deer and grey squirrel management	A local wildlife ranger will regularly check the new woodland to see if any interventions are needed to prevent deer and grey squirrels from causing damage.
Public facilities		
14	Include dog bins in the new woodland	We have no plans to install dog bins at this location. We expect visitors to be responsible dog owners and follow our dog code . Dog owners should always clear up after their dog. Where no bins are available, owners should bag the dog waste and take it home.
Use of agricultural land for new woodlands		
15	Why are you using agricultural land to create new woodlands	<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 Quoditch supports tree planting targets to create 30,000 hectares of new woodland every year by 2025 and provide a source of sustainable homegrown timber.</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 (grades 1 & 2). The land at Quoditch is graded at 3. All landowners choose how they should best manage their land to suit their business.</p>
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Appendix B: Letters and emails to announce the consultation launch

Dear neighbour

Public consultation on draft design proposals for a new woodland at Quoditch.

Thank you for your response to our early engagement survey about our new woodland near Quoditch.

I am now contacting you about the launch of a public consultation on our draft design proposals for the new woodland.

These are available to view and comment upon [here](https://consult.forestryengland.uk/forest-districts/quoditch-consult) until midnight on the 28th July 2024 - <https://consult.forestryengland.uk/forest-districts/quoditch-consult>

While we continue with our detailed planning for the woodland, we are keen to hear your views on our initial design proposals.

These have been informed by site surveys as well as the valuable insights gained from you and other local people earlier this year.

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

Public drop-in events

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

Date: Monday 22nd July 2024 **Time:** 4pm - 7pm **Location:** Ashwater Parish Hall, Ashwater, Beaworthy, EX21 5EZ

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

Please share this email with any friends or neighbours who may also be interested in our plans.

Kind regards

The Woodland Creation Team

Responding to the consultation

The consultation will be open from 8th July 2024 to 28th July 2024.

Online: We encourage you submit your response online. You can view our plans and submit your views here:

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

If you are unable to do this, you can respond via email, typing ‘Quoditch 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 July 2024. All responses will be summarised and included in a consultation report along with our response to the key issues raised and published on our website. Consultation feedback and further surveys will help shape the final design proposal we will submit to the Forestry Commission for regulatory review ahead of planting the new woodland.

The Woodland Creation Team

Forestry England

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



Dear Ashwater Parish Council

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

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The Woodland Creation Team
Forestry England

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

Appendix C: Consultation feedback form



A proposed new woodland at Quoditch

Overview

Forestry England would like to share with you draft plans for the proposed new woodland near Quoditch.

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

Consultation information, exhibition boards and information available to view and download on the website at:

https://consult.forestryengland.uk/forest-districts/quoditch-consult/supporting_documents/v2_2024.06.27_Quoditch_Consultation_Panels_RevB_FINALcompressed_1.pdf



Forestry England

Growing the nation's forests

A proposed new woodland at Quoditch, Devon

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

We are planning a new woodland near Quoditch, North Devon. 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.

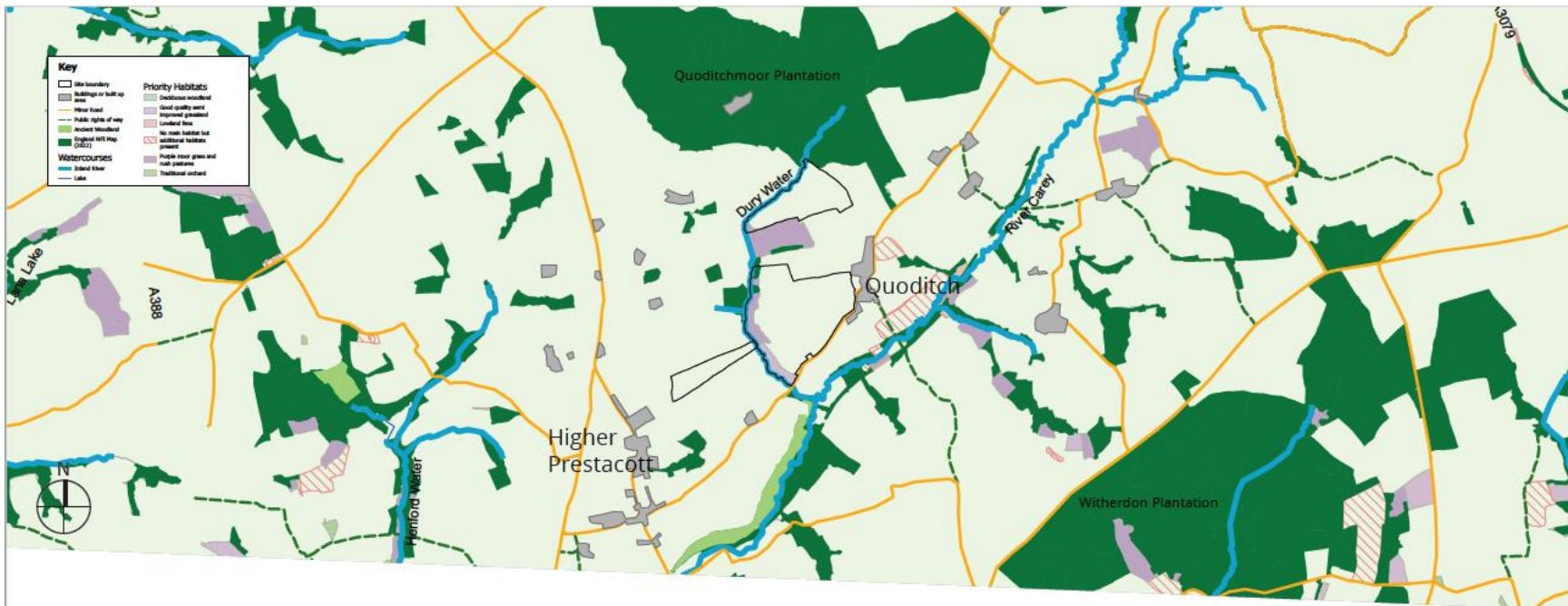
Our plans are part of a wider commitment to increasing tree planting rates across the UK to 30,000 hectares per year by 2025, supported by the Nature for Climate Fund. We aim to plant at least 2,000 hectares of new, high-quality woodlands across England.

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



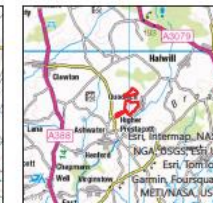
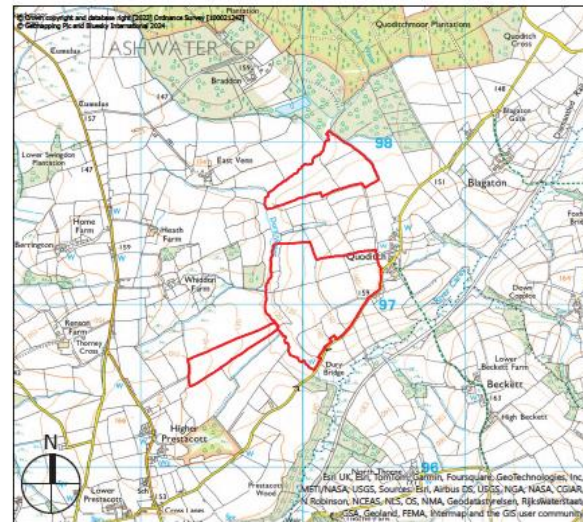


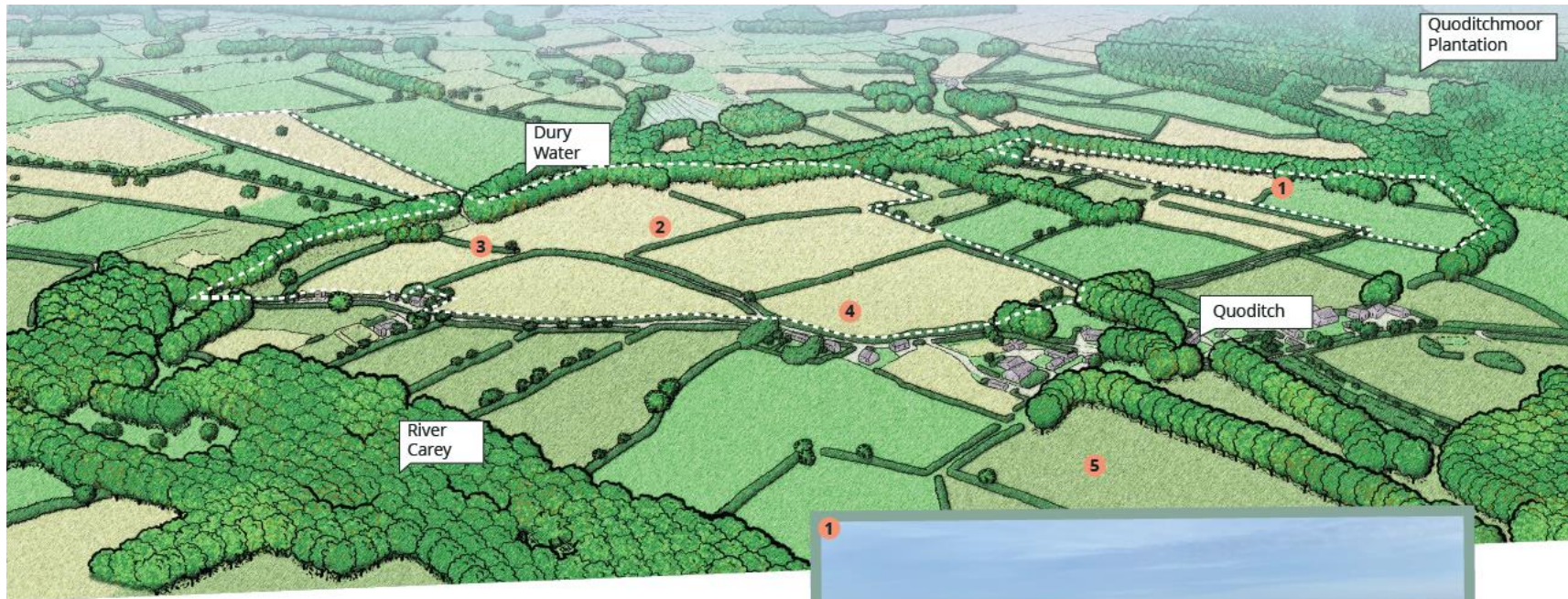
Site location & wider context

The proposed new woodland is in northwest Devon, next to the hamlet of Quoditch. The nearest town is Holsworthy, about 5.6 miles to the northwest. Forestry England's Quoditchmoor Plantation is directly north of the site and their Witherdon Plantation is to the southeast.

The site for the new woodland lies within Natural England's National Character Area (NCA) 149: The Culm. This area is mostly remote and sparsely populated. It is a landscape of rolling ridges and plateaus and small valleys with fast flowing rivers and streams that drain the area. The heavy poorly drained soil supports a pastoral (grazed) landscape. There are also unique culm grasslands, a type of habitat typically found in this area and known for uncommon plant communities such as purple moor grass.

The land in the surrounding area is rolling. Large conifer plantations, like Quoditchmoor Plantation, are on higher plateaus and are a key feature of this landscape.





The existing site

The southern part of the site sits on a low plateau with a gentle westerly aspect to Dury Water, which flows south, meeting the River Carey near Dury Bridge. The narrow western strip is on a slight ridge that gently slopes east, with small streams to the north and south. The northern part of the site slopes gently north towards Dury Water.

The land is mostly pasture farmland with medium sized rectilinear fields of rye-grass and clover ley, high managed hedgerows and a few mature broadleaf hedgerow trees.

Small historic woodland blocks (Whiddon Plantation) are located to the west of the southern part of the site or are associated with nearby farms. Wet woodland, trees and scrub are present along Dury Water, which flows south, along the western boundary.

Photos: 1. View from within the northern block towards Quoditchmoor Plantation. 2. View toward the southwest from within the main block. 3. View toward the south from within the main block. 4. View towards the houses on the road to the southeast of the site. 5. View towards the site from a gateway on the road to the southeast.



Draft design

How we design new woodland

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

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

- Preliminary habitat assessment
- Historic environment records
- Landscape and visual appraisal
- Local environment records
- Soil mapping
- Ecological site classification
- Climate matching tools
- Utilities searches
- Responses to initial consultation

Objectives for the new woodland



Create a diverse and resilient woodland: plant a mix of trees for a lasting supply of certified sustainable timber.



Improve connections between woodlands and enhance existing ancient woodlands: connect adjacent woodlands to improve habitats. Maintain hedges and create open spaces within the woodland for wildlife to thrive.



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



Capture carbon from the atmosphere: help meet net zero emissions goals by planting and managing woodland that will thrive in future climates and create new areas to store carbon.



Include research trials: to better understand how trees produce timber and capture carbon in a changing climate.

Tree species we could plant



English oak research trial

Red alder in mixes with aspen, willow and rowan

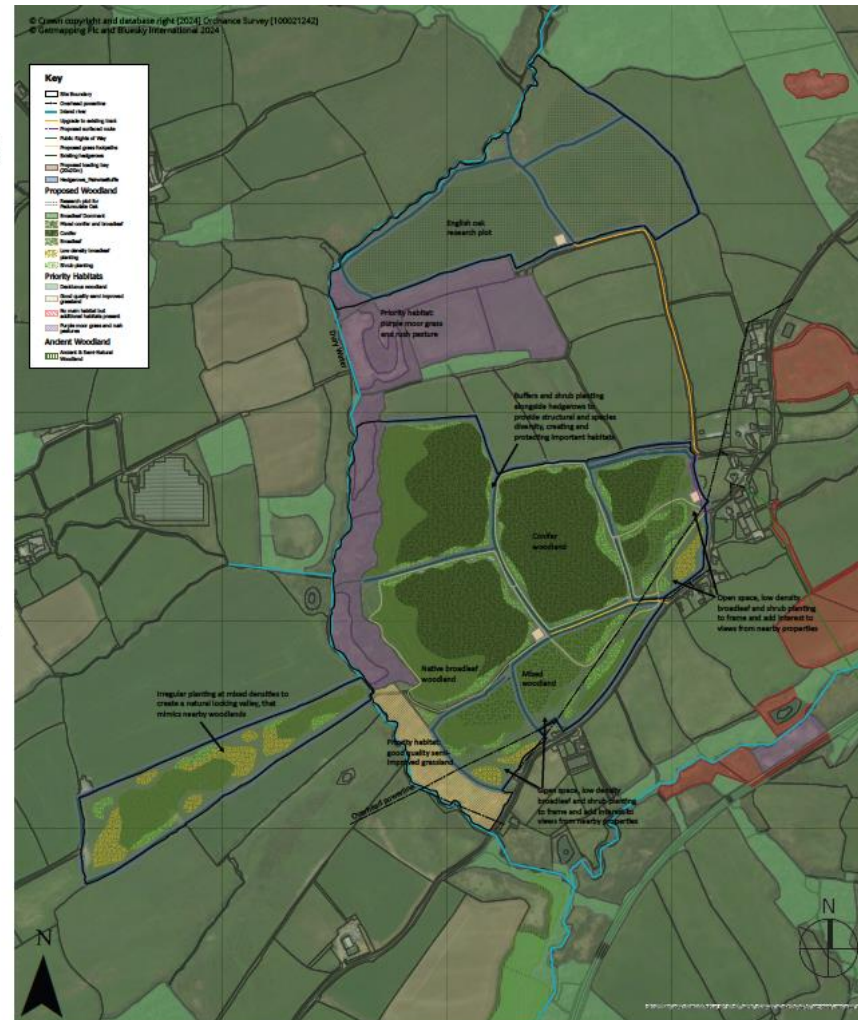
Sitka spruce with Macedonian pine

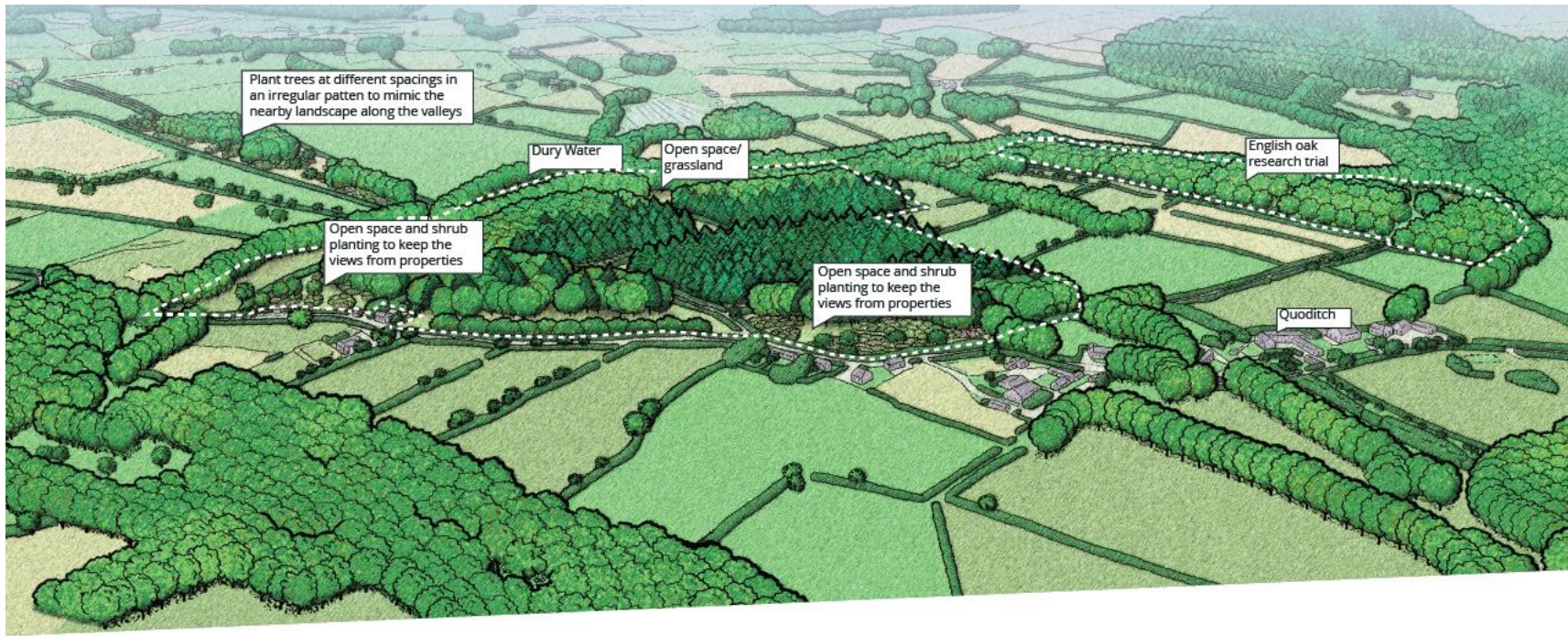


Lodgepole pine with Sessile oak, aspen and rowan

Shrubs including Guelder rose, rowan, spindle, elder, Alder buckthorn, hazel

Sessile oak with hornbeam, rowan and wild service tree





How the new woodland could look

Our initial designs include proposals to:

- Protect and enhance the habitat along Dury Water by planting broadleaf buffers and leaving some open space to create habitat diversity.
- Plant a mix of conifer, mixed and broadleaf woodland carefully placed within the landscape to provide sustainable timber and support biodiversity.
- Create wildlife corridors by leaving open space next to hedgerows and adding shrubby borders at the edges of woodland for wildlife to thrive.
- Keep views from properties next to the woodland by leaving open spaces near their boundaries and sparsely planting a mix of native shrubs and fruit trees that will also provide seasonal interest.
- Include an area in the northern fields for a research trial for English oak.
- Reflect the surrounding landscape pattern of keeping the conifers on the higher ground within the site.



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



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/quoditch-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 28th July 2024

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:

forestryengland.uk





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 Quoditch. Here are our responses to the key themes and questions people raised.

Public access

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

There will be pedestrian access into the new woodland off the road leading from Quoditch at the two existing gates. This will allow people to explore the new woodland by a series of grass paths. There is no plan to include cycling or horse riding specific infrastructure.

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.

Visitors will be welcome to walk their dogs in the new woodland, we do not intend to fence the whole woodland. We expect all dog owners to be responsible and to keep their pets under control in all the forests and woodlands we care for, following signs and our Forest Dog Code.

Design

Our draft design has considered the existing field pattern, the wider landscape character and proximity to nearby properties. Priority habitat at the western end of the southern woodland area will be retained and broadleaf planting with some open space is proposed along this edge adding structural and species diversity.

Our draft design includes grass paths, open spaces and keeps the existing hedgerows to create diverse habitats for wildlife and connect to existing open spaces outside the woodland.

This will be an attractive environment for many birds, and we are looking at the possibility of including owl boxes. 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 Quoditch and this will help shape our final design for the new woodland.

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

- Create mixed productive and resilient woodland that delivers benefits for people, nature and economy
- Improving woodland connectivity in the landscape
- Provide additional opportunities for informal access to the countryside
- Sequester atmospheric carbon, supporting achieving net zero emissions targets
- Establish research trials to understand how our native and commercial 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.

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 Quoditch, including Sitka spruce, Lodgepole pine, Maritime pine, oak, hornbeam, rowan, small-leaved lime, alders, willows and aspen.

Landscape and Views

Our designs are based on a landscape and visual assessment and sensitively consider how close the new woodland will be to our new neighbours. Where properties have important views, mainly along the southern edge, we have left open space (a minimum of 20metres) and will plant shrubs at the edges of the woodland closest to the houses to make it more visually interesting and open.

We will plant more broadleaf trees including some fruit trees in these areas as they are shorter than some conifer, generally live longer and help keep the view open also giving biodiversity benefits. The fruit trees will attract insects that will then feed the birds.

The woodland has been designed to blend with the overall landscape and to consider external views. Like the surrounding woodland, conifers are placed on higher ground, while mixed woodland and broadleaf trees are on the lower slopes. The western part of the site features scattered broadleaf trees to imitate the common strips of riparian (riverside) and broadleaf woodland in the area.

What are the research trials you are planning?

We are setting up a series of research trials to help understand how our native and commercial tree species grow and store carbon in a changing climate. These trials will examine how different spacings between trees can affect their growth across a variety of locations and climates. Over future decades, we will study the survival, growth, form and yield of English oak trees at Quoditch. The information we gather will help us make more accurate estimates of the timber and carbon stored in British woodland and inform future decarbonisation and net zero strategies.

Establishing the new woodland

We aim to plant the new woodland in winter 24/25. Maintenance during the first five years is important to ensure its long-term success. The woodland will be managed by the Forestry England team and local contractors. So we can manage and maintain the new woodland, we need access from the road for our forestry vehicles. We plan to use an existing access point for the north and south woodland areas to manage the site, and propose to improve the existing track to make this easier.

As part of our ongoing management of the woodland, we will begin to remove some trees after about 25 years - this will provide a sustainable supply of timber and help the woodland to thrive for decades to come.

Protecting the new woodland from deer

The UK is home to six species of deer, and their natural predators, such as bears, lynx and wolves, are extinct. Without predators, deer populations can become unnaturally big and their browsing can damage young trees. In the short-term, this can kill the 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 amount of 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 within the site boundary to protect the new woodland. 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. More information about how Forestry England manage deer can be found on our [website](#)².

Rabbit and deer fencing around the blocks of trees, will protect the young trees from browsing by deer and rabbits, and treeshelters (a protective tube or casing placed around a young tree) will protect smaller, wide spaced areas of trees.

Treeshelters and fences will be removed after approximately 10 years, after the woodland has become established, with materials being recycled where possible.

Scan the QR code
to find out more:

forestryengland.uk



¹ <https://www.deerinitiative.co.uk/>
² <https://www.forestryengland.uk/About-us/Deer-management-the-what-and-how.aspx>



Forestry England

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 Quoditch. Here are our responses to the key themes and questions people raised.

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.

Our plans are part of a wider commitment to increasing tree planting rates across the UK to 30,000 hectares per year by 2025 and provide a source of sustainable homegrown timber. Currently the UK imports over 80% of its timber¹ and we are more reliant on imported timber than imported food (40% of food is imported)².

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 Quoditch is graded at 3. All landowners choose how they should best manage their land to suit their business.

Will the woodlands sequester 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.

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¹ https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/54711/161712main.pdf
² https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/54711/161712main.pdf



Forestry England



New Woodland near Quoditch

Public Consultation Events on our proposed design

Monday 22nd July 4-7pm - Ashwater Parish
Hall, Ashwater, Beaworthy EX21 5EZ

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/quoditch-consult>



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

forestryengland.uk

Appendix E: Our response to key themes from early engagement

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¹ thedeerinitiative.co.uk

² forestryengland.uk

¹ [Forestry Facts and Figures 2023 - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](http://www.gov.uk)

² [United Kingdom Food Security Report 2021: Theme 2: UK Food Supply Sources - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](http://www.gov.uk)

Appendix F: Stakeholders contacted

Stakeholders contacted
MP for Torridge and Tavistock
Devon County Council
Ashwater Parish Council
Torridge District Council
Torridge District Council Planning
Devon Countryside Access Forum
Devon Wildlife Trust
Natural England
Environment Agency
RSPB
BT Openreach
Utility Assets
Wales and West Utilities - Gas
North Devon Biosphere
Westcountry Rivers Trust
Devon Butterfly Conservation
Buglife
Plantlife
Local Nature Recovery Strategy officer

Appendix G: Stakeholder responses

We received responses from the following stakeholders:

Their feedback has been included in the overall analysis included in this report.

Devon Countryside Access Forum
Torridge Planning (Torridge District Council)
The Environment Agency
Natural England

