



Forestry England

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# Sleetbeck

## Consultation report and our response to issues raised

December 2023



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# 1. Executive summary

Between 19<sup>th</sup> October and 9<sup>th</sup> November 2023, we held a consultation on proposals for the designs of a new woodland on the 63-hectare at Sleetbeck, adjoining Kershope Forest approximately 13.5 miles from Carlisle.

We received 23 responses to the consultation which included 135 comments. Whilst some comments were supportive, others highlighted concerns about our proposals, raised questions or made suggestions.

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

- We will include fruit trees in the area closest to Sleetbeck, as part of the low density planting which will be managed as wood pasture or wood meadow.
- We will plant trees in scattered groups and individually in the low density planting
- We will increase the network of grass rides to connect access across to the west of the woodland so that people can explore both the east and west side of the woodland
- We have undertaken a peat survey so that we have the information we need to inform our final designs for the woodland.

Over the coming weeks, we will be finalising our designs to reflect these changes, ahead of an application to the Forestry Commission for permission to create the woodland.

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

## 2. About the Consultation

### 2.1 Introduction

Forestry England is creating a new 63-hectare woodland on land we have bought on the edge of Kershope Forest which Forestry England already manages. The land, which was previously used for grazing livestock, will provide 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 a 'Coronation Wood' to celebrate the Coronation of His Majesty King Charles III.

The woodland will be managed as part of the existing Kershope Forest which is an important recreational facility for walkers, cyclists and horse riders from the local area and wider northeast Cumbria. Visitors can enjoy the extensive forest road network and public rights of way.

The new woodland will have public access for visitors to explore a quieter forest landscape in every season, expand existing wildlife habitats to provide greater benefits for diversity and a sustainable source of timber.

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 Who we consulted.

Our consultation was open to anyone who lived or worked in the local area or had an interest in our proposals. We focused publicising the consultation on people living in the Sleetbeck area as well as Cumberland Council and Bewcastle Parish Council. We also contacted other stakeholders we consult with when creating new woodlands including local political representatives, the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB), Cumbria Wildlife Trust and Natural England. The list of stakeholders we contacted is included in Appendix E.

## 2.4 Dates and duration

The consultation was open for 3 weeks from 19<sup>th</sup> October to midnight on the 9<sup>th</sup> November 2023.

## 2.5 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.

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

## 2.6 Methods of responding

Respondents to the consultation were invited to give their views between the 19<sup>th</sup> October and midnight on the 9<sup>th</sup> November 2023 by:

- Completing the questionnaire included on our website at <https://consult.forestryengland.uk/forest-districts/sleetbeck>
- Giving comments by email to [Woodland.creation@forestryengland.co.uk](mailto:Woodland.creation@forestryengland.co.uk)
- Leaving comments or suggestions at the public information event held at **Roadhead Public Hall on 1<sup>st</sup> November 2023 from 4pm to 7pm**. (Comments from this event have been summarised separately in section 3.5 of this report).

## 2.7 Overview of consultation responses

We received 23 responses to the consultation. 20 were submitted by completing the consultation online, and three were submitted by email. The responses were coded into 135 separate comments and categorised as either positive, negative/concerns, questions or suggestions.

## 2.8 Consultation materials and publicity

### 2.8.1 Consultation materials

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

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

We also featured comment boards at the consultation drop in event inviting attendees to indicate their preferences for potential uses or planting in the new woodland and to leave general comments about the proposals.

### 2.8.2 Consultation activity

We publicised the consultation in the following ways:

- **Media release:** Distributed to local news outlets
- **Dedicated web page:** on the Forestry England website
- **Letters** to approx. 38 properties in the local area
- **Letters/emails** to stakeholders
- **Posters:** Posters publicising the consultation were put up on the Sleetbeck road and in public areas around Kershope Forest. We also shared the poster with Bewcastle Parish Council and Cumberland Council

- **Consultation drop in event:** We held a drop in event at the Roadhead Public Hall on 1<sup>st</sup> November 2023 from 4pm to 7pm. The event showed the information already published on the website on large posters around the venue and Forestry England staff were on hand to talk about the proposals, answer questions or queries, and listen to any concerns from those attending.

Attendees were also encouraged to leave immediate feedback on two comment boards and to respond to the consultation formally via the online survey or by email. We also asked attendees to leave their contact details if they would like to be kept updated about the proposals. Around 60 people attended this event.

### 2.8.3 Analysis of consultation responses

Responses received by completing the on-line 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 23 responses to the consultation, 20 via the online survey and three by email. Eight of the responses were received from stakeholders (listed in Appendix F).

Comments left on the comment boards at the drop in event have been coded separately and are summarised in Section 3.4 of this document.

### 3.1 Positive comments

Key positive comments included mentions of the benefits the new woodland would have on the wider environment, general positive comments for example 'we are supportive of the proposals', specific comments about tree planting and choice such as: 'the proposed planting will soften the forest edge'; would like to be kept updated about the consultation and the proposals and 'good to see that the land will be actively managed'.

Theme: Positive comments	Mentions
Impact on carbon, air quality environment, soil quality, sustainable timber, wellbeing, and diversity	13
General positive comment	7
Tree planting and choice	4
Communication and consultation	3
Woodland management, fencing and signage	1
Woodland access and maintenance	1

## 3.2 Concerns/ negative comments

The concerns most mentioned, are summarised in the table below. Specific concerns about birds and wildlife included the presence of upland waders, the woodland attracting additional dog walkers and the potential impact on wildlife and livestock, and how the new woodland would encourage more vermin or predators to the area.

Theme: Concerns	Mentions
Impact on birds and wildlife	13
Impact on agricultural land, food production and jobs	12
Traffic and parking	8
Impact on carbon, air quality environment, soil quality, sustainable timber, wellbeing, and diversity	7
Area already densely forested	6
Impact on drainage	5
Tree planting and choice	4
General negative	3
Survey outcome results - carbon savings, presence of peat, species displaced, breeding birds, land lost to food production and cumulative impact on loss of farmland	2
Communication and consultation	1
Views	1
Woodland management, fencing and signage	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>63</b>

### 3.3 Questions & suggestions

We received 11 questions and 28 suggestions about the proposals.

The questions and suggestions most mentioned are summarised into themes in the table below, alongside the number of questions or suggestions in each theme. Tree planting and the choice of trees included suggestions to include fruit trees, planting that will improve drainage, group trees into clusters and include specific tree species. There were also questions about the surveys we had undertaken to help shape the proposals for the new woodland, and specific requests to view the outcome of the breeding bird survey and the vegetation survey.

Theme - questions & suggestions	Question	Suggestion
Survey outcome results - carbon savings, presence of peat, species displaced, breeding birds, land lost to food production and cumulative impact on loss of farmland	6	
Tree planting and choice	3	10
Woodland management, fencing and signage	1	3
Parking and access	1	1
Request to include family memorial	1	
Woodland users and trails		4
Impact on birds and wildlife		3
Grazing animals		3
Additional surveys - land lost to food production and cumulative impact on loss of farmland, suitability of land for planting		2
Users of the new woodland		2
Impact on drainage		1
Communication and consultation		1
Alternative forest location		1
<b>Total</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>30</b>

The code frame summarising the comments received to the consultation are included in **Appendix C**.

### 3.4 Feedback from the consultation drop in event.

Over 60 people attended the drop in consultation event held at Roadhead Public Hall on 1<sup>st</sup> November 2023 from 4pm to 7pm.

The event showed 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.



**Board 1:** Invited free comments using sticky notes. Attendees posted 47 comments which are summarised in the table below.

The most mentioned concerns were about the impact of the proposals on agricultural land, food production and jobs and on birds and wildlife. Specific mentions included concerns about the presence of ground nesting birds and the loss of habitat for nesting birds.

The theme of woodland users, uses and trails included suggestions such as bug hotels, benches, nature trails, hammocks, bird hides and camping facilities. Suggestions for tree planting and trees included 'prefer a mixture of clustered and single trees'; 'keep the Beech trees and give them plenty of room; 'No pasture' 'more conifer planting' and Oak can grow well - lots of self-seeding'.

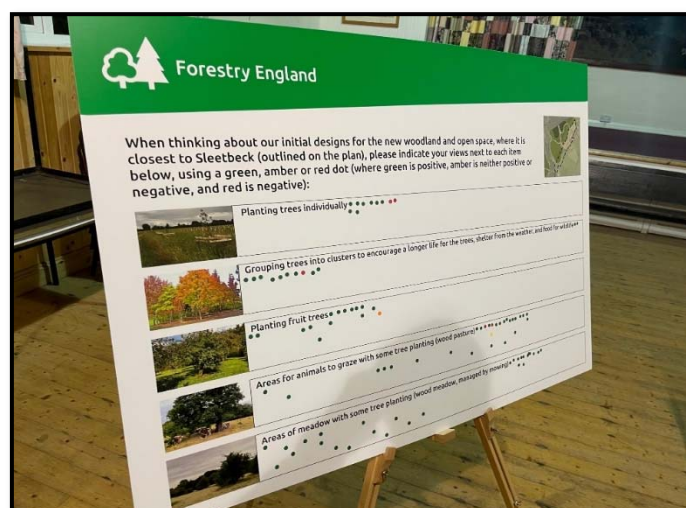
Theme	Positive	Concern	Question	Suggestion	Total
Woodland uses, users and trails		2		13	15
Tree planting and choice	1			6	7
Impact on agricultural land, food, production, and jobs		5			5
Impact on birds and wildlife		3		1	4
Impact on drainage		1		2	3
Woodland management, fencing and signage	1	1			2
Parking and access				2	2
Impact on carbon, air quality environment, soil quality, sustainable timber, wellbeing, and diversity		1		1	2
Area already densely forested		2			2
General negative		2			2
Woodland location		1			1
Woodland access and maintenance			1		1
Communication and consultation		1			1
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>47</b>

## Board 2

Attendees were invited to indicate their preferences on features that could be included within the new woodland.

Question: When thinking about our initial designs for the new woodland and open space, where it is closest to Sleetbeck (outlined on the plan), please indicate your views next to each item below using a green, amber, or red dot (where green is positive, amber is neither positive or negative and red is negative). A total of 99 stickers were posted, with the most commented upon being a preference for areas of wood meadow with some tree planting, closely followed by areas for animals to graze with some tree planting.

Question	Positive	Neutral	Negative
Planting trees individually	8	0	2
Grouping trees into clusters to encourage a longer life for the trees shelter from the weather, and food for wildlife	9	0	1
Planting fruit trees	14	1	0
Areas for animals to graze with some tree planting (wood pasture)	25	1	2
Areas of meadow with some tree planting (wood meadow managed by mowing)	26	0	0



## 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.

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 will include fruit trees in the area closest to Sleetbeck, as part of the low density planting which will be managed as wood pasture or wood meadow
- We will plant trees in scattered groups and individually in the low density planting
- We will increase the network of grass rides to connect access across to the west of the woodland so that people can explore both the east and west side of the woodland
- We have undertaken a peat survey so that we have the information we need to inform our final designs for the woodland

	Theme	Question or Issue	Our response
1.	Additional surveys	We advise that a National Vegetation Classification (NVC) survey should be undertaken to classify the unit and to determine whether woodland creation is appropriate in this field.	We plan to undertake detailed vegetation surveys on the western section of the site next spring/summer and therefore this section would not be planted until the following winter.
2.		Conduct additional land surveys re suitability of the land for planting and cumulative loss of farmland.	We have conducted a preliminary ecological assessment and a breeding bird survey and, since the public consultation a peat survey. Surveys looking at the cumulative loss of farmland the suitability of the land for planting have not been undertaken and are not normally required as part of the regulatory approval process. The land at Sleetbeck is not considered the best and most versatile land for food production, it is grade 4 and 5, but is well suited for tree planting.
3.	Area already densely forested	Area already densely forested	<p>Forestry England are appraising sites all around the country to create new woodlands which will capture carbon, restore, and connect habitats, and be sustainably managed for everybody to enjoy.</p> <p>The new woodlands will support the Government's tree planting targets to create 30,000 hectares of new woodland every year by 2025. Currently the UK imports over 80% of its timber <sup>iii</sup>and we are more reliant on imported timber than imported food (over 40%<sup>iii</sup> of food is imported).</p>

			<p>Our approach to the new woodland at Sleetbeck, will include a mixture of planting and bring different types of woodland to the area including more open and broadleaf areas. This will soften the edge of the woodland in landscape terms.</p> <p>Before we buy or lease land, we individually assess each site to make sure they are suitable for woodland creation, and we prioritise lower quality or less productive land. Our careful and detailed planning means we will plant the right tree in the right place and for the right reason.</p>
4.	Woodland management, fencing and signage	Concerns about maintenance of land area that is getting bigger. Concerns about existing maintenance issues - how can the Forestry Commission convince us that they will be able to keep up with even more maintenance?	Forestry England adapts and prioritises its maintenance plan to match the needs of the estate and its programmes.
5.	Communication and consultation	Include Sleetbeck community in the design of the new woodland	We are grateful for the many comments, questions and concerns we have received to the recent public consultation. Feedback has informed amendments to our proposals (listed at the beginning of this document), and we will explore options for further engagement as our plans for the new woodland progress. This could include educational visits and newsletter updates.
6.		Period allowed for the consultation	We seek to hold consultations for a time that is proportional to the scale of the proposals for the woodland and allows adequate time for the proposals to be considered and responded to. We

			considered three weeks to be appropriate for our proposals at Sleetbeck. However, in response to requests, we accepted submissions after the formal closing date. As a rule, we would allow longer during holiday periods.
7.	Grazing animals	Suggestions and concerns about the inclusion of grazing animals in the woodland. It should be woodland only not animal grazing and do not introduce cows	We want to retain an open outlook for the homes overlooking part of the new woodland. Mindful of the farming heritage in the area we are exploring if grazing would be a suitable way to manage this area, this received a mixed response at consultation and concerns were raised about dogs and livestock. The area of low density planting will either be managed as wood pasture or wood meadow.
8.	Impact on agricultural land, food production and jobs	Impact on agricultural land, food production, jobs  Future food security	Forestry England are creating new woodlands which will capture carbon, restore, and connect habitats, enhance biodiversity, and supply a sustainable source of homegrown timber. Sites are individually appraised across several criteria to assess their suitability for woodland creation. This appraisal considers their existing land use, and we target lower quality or less productive land to create new woodlands.  Whilst we recognise the importance of food security, currently the UK imports over 80% of its timber <a href="#">[1]</a> and we are more reliant on imported timber than imported food (over 40% <a href="#">[1]</a> of food is imported). Our proposals for a new woodland at Sleetbeck support the Government's tree planting targets to create 30,000 hectares of new woodland every year by 2025 and a source of sustainable home-grown timber.

			<p>The land at Sleetbeck is not considered the best and most versatile land for food production, it is grade 4 and 5, but is well suited for tree planting.</p> <p>The new woodland will support the existing economy and local jobs. Contractors will be needed to maintain the forest and sawmills in the area will be used to harvest and process timber products as the woodland matures.</p>
9.	Impact on birds and wildlife	Impact on wildlife; woodland will encourage more vermin/predators	<p>The site for the new woodland at Sleetbeck is already within the 'predator shadow' (land within 500m of an existing woodland where predators are likely to have an impact on existing breeding birds). This means our planting proposals at Sleetbeck are unlikely to increase the impact of predators on existing breeding birds.</p> <p>The RSPB and the Environment Agency are supportive of our proposals for the new woodland and the impact of predators on breeding birds will be considered as part of our application to the Forestry Commission for permission to plant the forest.</p>
10.		Impact on birds (e.g., curlew, lapwing, fieldfare, redwing, snipe etc)	<p>We have undertaken a breeding bird survey following British Trust for Ornithology (BTO) guidelines. The survey shows there is one pair of wading birds (Curlew) on the site. The new woodland is likely to benefit species such as the nightjar, cuckoo, tawny owl, jay, willow warbler, grasshopper warbler, song thrush and lesser redpoll. These are all amber or red on the Birds of</p>

			Conservation Concern list of species which assesses the status of UK bird populations. The RSPB are supportive of our proposals for the new woodland.
11.		Impact of dogs on local wildlife and livestock	We encourage all dog owners to be responsible and keep their pets under control, following signage and following the <a href="#">Forest Dog Code</a> .
12.		Impact on Black Lyne and Sleet beck and the trout and salmon population	The Environment Agency have no concerns about our proposals and have provided advice about forestry operations. There are no plans for additional river crossings.
13.		Minimise the risk of siltation of the becks during any forestry operations.	<p>We will aim to minimise disturbance when preparing the soil for planting. We will monitor the drainage and silt traps, or open ditches may be constructed if required to reduce run off.</p> <p>The site will first be mown and then trees will be planted using a continuous mounding technique, rather than hinge mounding. A continuous moulder machine is pulled behind a tractor creating a series of mounds which we then plant on. This means that no grooves or channels will be created as we prepare the ground for planting. It is a more environmentally friendly approach than traditional ground preparation techniques like ploughing as it disturbs far less soil and minimises pollution.</p>



14.		<p>Focus on species that provide small-seeded food source and avoid patches of large seeded, seed producing broadleaves that may encourage Grey Squirrel.</p> <p>Include features desirable to species such as red squirrels, pine marten, hen harriers, otters.</p>	<p>We have included a small percentage of Sessile oak in the design however due to regulations around red and grey squirrel areas, the percentage of large, seeded trees included in the woodland must remain below 10%. Historically the grey squirrel population has been controlled and we will continue to do this.</p>
15.		<p>The new woodland will have a negative impact on biodiversity.</p>	<p>Sleetbeck will be a mixed woodland containing broadleaf and conifer species. Diversity in tree species and types of woodland is key to how wildlife rich they will be as they bring an array of benefits including pest and disease resistance, resilience to climate change and increased wildlife habitats. Species that may benefit include improving the habitat for red squirrels. Fruit trees will be included in the low density planting area to improve biodiversity, provide food for local residents and local wildlife as well as habitats for invertebrates and small mammals The Environment Agency and the RSPB are supportive of our proposals.</p>
16.	<p>Impact on carbon, air quality environment, soil quality, sustainable timber, wellbeing, and diversity</p>	<p>Impact on carbon in the soil</p>	<p>Woodlands are excellent at absorbing and storing carbon and can play a role in meeting global net zero targets. Woodlands planted with a mixture of tree species store more carbon than those planted with single or a low number of species such as conifers. Our proposals for Sleetbeck are for a mixed woodland containing broadleaf and conifer species.</p>

			There is some research that shows soil carbon is higher in pastureland, however this generally refers to unimproved meadow areas. In addition, these studies do not consider the carbon stored above ground in the trees. The mixture of deciduous trees in the proposed plan will also encourage the buildup of leaf litter, adding to the soil carbon store.
17.		Concerns about hydraulic oil in the ditches around the areas where Forestry works have been carried out.	We follow the water guidelines set out in the UK Forestry Standard <sup>(iii)</sup> in all our forestry operations. If unexpected spills occur, all contract machinery should have oil spill kits as part of their emergency procedures. The work proposed for the new planting site will occur outside safety buffer zones, and will not impact on Sleet Beck.
18.		Question the biodiversity benefits of replacing diverse grassland with productive conifers. Impact of forestry works on carbon	We will be undertaking additional vegetation surveys on the western half of the site identified as having the most potential to be species rich and any appropriate design changes will be made prior to planting this area. The proposed design included diverse habitats to help biodiversity.
19.	Alternative forest location	Forest in wrong place, not against idea in principle - suggest alternative location Kershope Forest	The proposals for the woodland at Sleetbeck will form a natural extension to Kershope Forest and contribute towards Government tree planting targets. Assessments have been undertaken to assess the suitability of the site for woodland creation prior to its purchase.
20.	Impact on drainage	Ground preparation, tree planting in grooves; impact on drainage and water run off on local homes	We will aim to minimise disturbance when preparing the soil for planting.  The site will first be mown and then trees will be planted using a continuous mounding technique, rather than hinge mounding. A continuous moulder

			<p>machine is pulled behind a tractor creating a series of mounds which we then plant on. This means that no grooves or channels will be created as we prepare the ground for planting. It's a more environmentally friendly approach than traditional ground preparation techniques like ploughing as it disturbs far less soil and minimises pollution.</p> <p>We will monitor the drainage. Silt traps or open ditches may be constructed if required to reduce run off.</p>
21.		Dig a ditch between the new woodland and the houses in Sleetbeck to prevent drain blockages/flooding	<p>Our engineers have visited the site and will continue to monitor the situation.</p> <p>Silt traps or open ditches may be constructed if required to reduce run off.</p>
22.	Parking and access traffic	Where is the provision for/include parking?	The new woodland will allow for access on foot from the existing Kershope Forest and nearby residents on Sleetbeck Road. There is no intention to introduce new car parking facilities for the new woodland.
23.		Include carparking for horseboxes	There are no plans to provide horse specific infrastructure in the new woodland. Horse riders will still be able to use the network of existing forest roads and natural green trails.
24.		Proposals will encourage more people into the countryside.  Concerns about the impact of parking on local residents	While the new woodland will be publicly accessible, we are not actively promoting it as an amenity woodland. Access will be from the existing Kershope parking area, and we will discourage parking in the woodland entrances.
25.		Impact of traffic on roads	Some of the access for planting will be along the Sleetbeck Road. However, most of traffic associated

			with the management operations for the forest will be via Kershope Forest. The haulage route has been approved by the Cumbria & North East England Timber Transport Forum which includes Cumberland Council and there is a clear process in place to report concerns should these arise. It will be around 20 years before timber transported from the site and the access is proposed to be through the existing Kershope site.
26.	Survey outcome results - carbon savings, presence of peat, species displaced, breeding birds, land lost to food production and cumulative impact on loss of farmland.	Presence of peat	Peatlands are important for carbon storage and the habitats they support. We are currently conducting a peat survey to understand more about the soil conditions and if peat is present. The survey will be submitted to the Forestry Commission as part of our application for permission to plant the woodland.
27.		What are the survey results re species displaced	We have undertaken a breeding birds survey. This shows there is one pair of wading birds (Curlew) on the site. The survey will be included in our submission for permission to plant the woodland and has been shared with the local Parish Council.
28.		What were the survey results re ground lost to food production	We have not undertaken any surveys about this. Our proposals for a new woodland at Sleetbeck support the Government's tree planting targets to create 30,000 hectares of new woodland every year by 2025 and to increase sources of sustainable home-grown timber. Currently the UK imports 80% of its timber and we are more reliant on imported timber than imported food.  In response to issues raised we will include fruit trees in the area closest to Sleetbeck, as part of the

			low density planting which will be managed as wood pasture or wood meadow.
29.	Tree planting and choice	Support re-wilding and tree diversity - but not blanket conifer planting	Our proposals are for a diverse planting of species. Each block will comprise a mix of species. The conifer blocks will have shrubby species on the edge to help integrate them into the surrounding habitats.
30.		Mix of planting Increase the area of conifer. Why silver birch and not downy birch Why juniper; blackthorn; sessile oak, beech	<p>Our approach to the new woodland at Sleetbeck, will include a mixture of planting and bring different types of woodland to the area including more open and broadleaf areas. This will soften the edge of the woodland in landscape terms.</p> <p>Silver Birch has been suggested as there is an improved variety that is available to us that grows a better timber crop. The improved silver birch originates from seed stands in Scotland and therefore should be well suited to this site.</p> <p>We have included a small percentage of Sessile oak in the design however due to regulations around red and grey squirrel areas, the percentage of large, seeded trees included in the woodland must remain below 10%. Historically the grey squirrel population has been controlled and we will continue to do this.</p> <p>Juniper and Blackthorn have been included to increase the biodiversity and structural diversity of the woodland, they will provide food sources and winter cover for native songbirds. They will be planted on the edges of woodland blocks to create an edge habitat.</p>

			<p>Fruit trees, including Cherry, will be planted in the area closest to Sleetbeck, as part of the low density planting which will be managed as wood pasture or wood meadow.</p> <p>Beech has not been included due to limitations around the planting of large, seeded broadleaves in a red squirrel area. Existing beech hedgerow trees will be retained.</p> <p>The proposals at Sleetbeck do not include any coniferous planting on the edge or near the edge of the river.</p>
31.		Too much non-native tree planting	Over 80% of the trees suggested for planting are native. The non-native trees chosen for the site have been carefully selected to increase biodiversity, provide a sustainable timber crop, and improve resilience of the woodland to the changing climate.
32.		Concern that Scots pine tree planting will impinge on new hardwood deciduous planting, and increase PH in the soil	We have used Forest Development Types when considering the mixture of species chosen for Sleetbeck. These are informed by research to determine species that can grow well together in particular quantities. The diverse mixture of species chosen across the site should keep the soil balanced and in good health.
33.		Preferred to see more productive conifers	Research shows that a more diverse woodland is a more productive woodland, in addition we must make changes in anticipation of the changing climate and associated risks such as a predicted

			increase in pests and diseases. Including a range of species reduces these risks.
34.		What are the soil types where you propose the Douglas fir, Western hemlock, Western red cedar and Scots pine mix?	The soil at this location is slowly permeable, seasonally wet acid loamy and clayey soils
35.		Why can't existing conifer forests be removed and replaced with mixed woodlands	There is an agreed forest design plan for the existing woodland, which is reviewed every 5 years, this sets out the proposed objectives and species mixes. The Kershope plan will be reviewed and consulted upon in the next 2 years. When the plan is reviewed it will consider how the existing Kershope Forest will integrate with the new woodland.
36.		Include fewer trees in the open tree pasture	We are proposing that this area of the woodland will be low density with about 10 trees per hectare.
37.		Include planting that improves drainage/water run off	We will monitor the drainage. Silt traps or open ditches may be constructed if required to reduce run off.
38.		Suggestions: include fruit trees	We will include the planting of fruit trees in our designs - species that would thrive in this setting would be local apple trees, crab apple, wild cherries, damson, and greengages.

39.		Inclusion of the adjacent plantations on ancient woodland sites (PAWS) into the scheme	<p>The adjacent PAWS site is within Forestry England ownership. The PAWS site is formed of broadleaved woodland and natural colonisation and will continue to be managed in this way.</p> <p>The purchase of land at Sleetbeck will allow easier access to continue management of the PAWS woodland and conifer planting which is between the PAWS area and the newly purchased site. Whilst outside of the scope of the woodland creation project, as part of long-term forest management, we plan to remove the Sitka spruce strip (next to the PAWS) and restore this area as broadleaved woodland, using native planting and natural colonisation.</p>
40.		Group trees into clusters	In response to feedback from the consultation we propose to include both individual trees and trees in clusters as part of the low density planting which will be managed as wood pasture or wood meadow.
41.	Users of the new woodland	Include horse friendly gates	There are no plans to provide horse specific infrastructure in the new woodland. Horse riders will still be able to use the network of existing network of forest roads and natural green trails.
42.		Accessibility - wheelchairs	The trails within the new woodland will be generally wide grass rides that are mown regularly. There will be no stiles or steps.
43.	Views	Impact on views (landscape & people)	The woodland proposals closest to Sleetbeck and neighbouring properties have been carefully considered. We understand some Sleetbeck properties and gardens have views into the site, which are overlook the open farmland with Kershope Forest edge visible beyond. We therefore



			propose to keep open space and plant fewer trees, at wider spacing (at approx. 10 trees per hectare (within a 100x100m area)). These trees would be broadleaved and include species such as: Sycamore, birch, crab apple as well as fruit trees. We intend for this low density planting area to be managed as wood pasture or wood meadow, to maintain the open character and farming heritage of this area. Beyond this area, in the middle-distance, we propose a mixture of broadleaved woodland, which would be visible beyond the low density planting, this mixed broadleaved planting will increase the variety of species and add colour and texture, types of species we could plant include aspen with rowan, hawthorn, silver birch, blackthorn and sycamore with hornbeam, crab apple, blackthorn, and elder. The mixed broadleaved woodland planting would be approximately 100-140m from houses in Sleetbeck.
44.	Woodland access and maintenance	Include access gate opposite Sleetbeck Farm	We have located the access to the new woodland nearer the properties in Sleetbeck to encourage easy pedestrian access with less walking along the road. We have updated the walking routes to link the eastern and western section so people can walk around the site more easily.
45.	Woodland management, fencing and signage	Will the barbed wire fencing be removed	Forestry England do not install barbed wire on new fencing and plan to remove redundant fencing and barbed wire.
46.		Mowing of grass should be an ongoing activity	In the area closest to Sleetbeck, there will be as part of the low density planting which will be managed as wood pasture or wood meadow. The grass ride paths will also be mown.

47.		Include signs - no picnics or BBQs	The woodland will be available for all to enjoy the quiet open space. We will locate signage at the entrance to the new woodland with a name and recognition that the new woodland is a coronation wood. Barbecues are a serious fire risk and disposable barbecues are not allowed anywhere in our forests or woodlands. This is to help prevent forest fires and help everyone use fewer single-use items as part of their forest visit.
48.	Woodland users and trails	Include horse friendly trails	The trails within the new woodland will be grass rides. There are no plans to provide horse specific infrastructure in the new woodland. Horse riders will still be able to use the network of existing network of forest roads and natural green trails.
49.		Locate the new paths in the woodland - away from Sleetbeck houses back gardens	The grass rides on the plans are shown indicatively approximately 100-140 metres away from the properties.
50.		Do not widely publicise - retain woodland for use by local residents	While the new woodland will be publicly accessible for people to enjoy, we are not actively promoting it as an amenity woodland and will not be introducing additional parking.
51.		Include more paths in the woodland	We have amended the paths so that people can explore the east and west side of the woodland.

<sup>[1]</sup> [Forestry Statistics and Forestry Facts & Figures - Forest Research](#)

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

<sup>[3]</sup> [The UK Forestry Standard - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

## Appendix A: Consultation information

Exhibition boards and information available to view and download on the website at <https://consult.forestryengland.uk/forest-districts/sleetbeck>



**Forestry England**

### Growing the nation's forests

#### A proposed new woodland near Sleetbeck in Cumbria

## We are planting new woodlands to expand the nation's forests we care for

We are working on designs for a new woodland in Cumbria, near the hamlet of Sleetbeck, which will join on to Kershope Forest. We would like your comments and suggestions on our initial proposals. Your feedback will inform our final designs for the woodland.

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

Every new woodland will have public access so you can explore and enjoy them to support your health and wellbeing. They will be valuable places for wildlife,

often linking other woods to provide green corridors for wildlife to move and thrive across the landscape.

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

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 combating flooding.

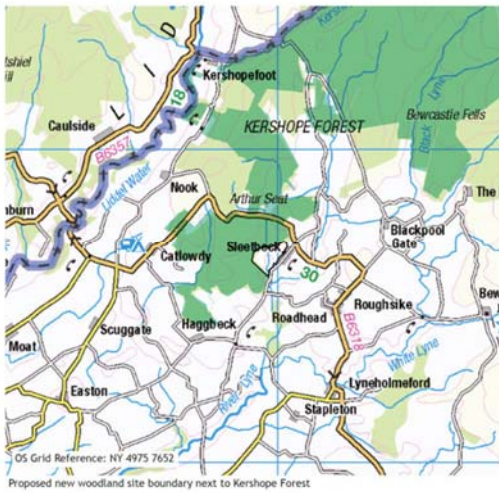
Scan the QR code to find out more:  
[forestryengland.uk](https://forestryengland.uk)



## New woodland location

The proposed new woodland is in Cumbria near the hamlet of Sleetbeck next to Kershope Forest, approximately 6km from the Scottish border. Forestry England has bought the land from a private landowner.

The site lies within Natural England's National Character Area (NCA) 05 Border Moors and Forests. This NCA is an upland plateau lying to the south of a natural high ridge of hills that form the border with Scotland.



View northwest towards Kershope Forest from the Kinky Hill to Clattering Forge public right of way

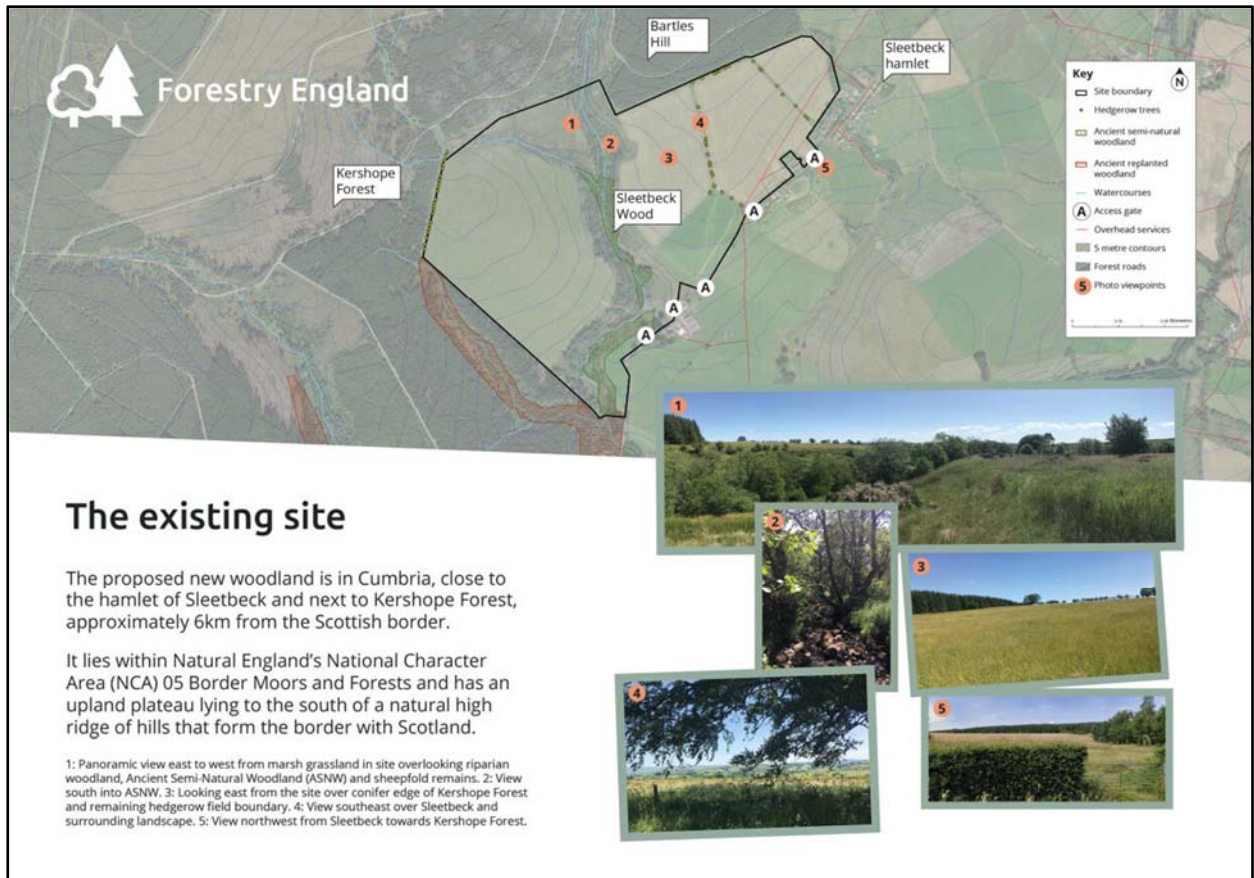


View from edge of Kershope Forest towards Sleetbeck

A large-scale upland landscape of sweeping moorlands and coniferous forests, with extensive views, sparsely populated, with dark night skies and a strong feeling of remoteness and tranquillity. The surrounding upland landscape features scattered farms with semi-improved and improved pasture in the larger valleys, with small copses of broadleaved woodland.

Kershope Forest is part of Kielder Forest Plan area, an area of more than 60,000 hectares in Northumberland and Cumbria. Most of the forest is planted with conifers, primarily managed as a timber resource, although there are smaller areas of ancient woodland among the plantations.

On average more than a third of the planted area is younger second rotation stands. Future restocking will introduce greater species diversity into timber crops, as well as increasing the area of native broadleaved woodland. Several public rights of way run through Kershope forest and horse riding is welcomed using the forest road network and natural green trails.





# How the new woodland could look

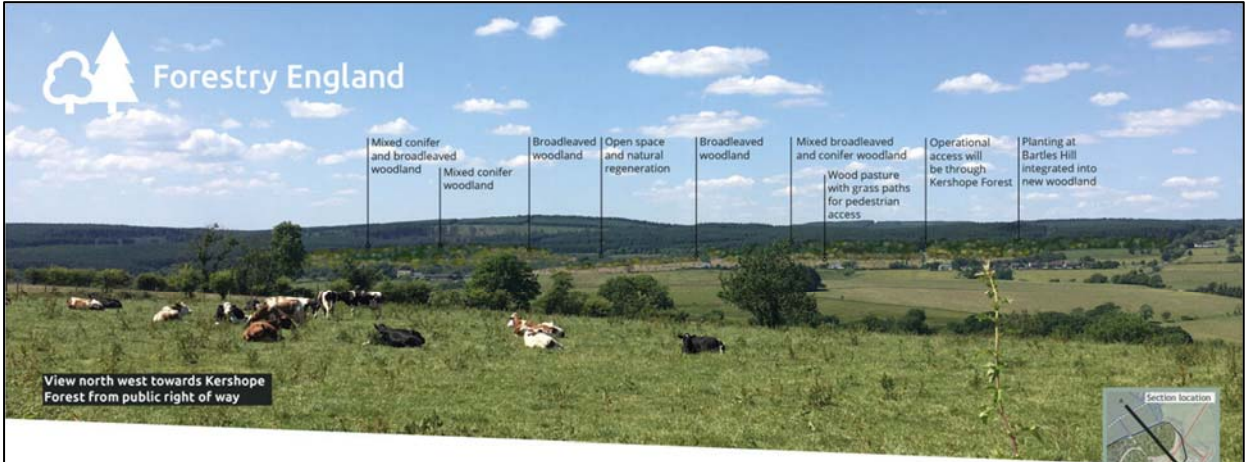
Our proposed designs for the new woodland will have benefits to people, wildlife and the wider landscape. They will draw on detailed site surveys, as well as feedback from our local communities, to shape how the new woodland could look.

## Objectives for the new woodland

-  **Public access for health and wellbeing:** create low-key public recreation opportunities with new areas for people to walk in the woodland.
-  **Provide landscape improvements:** to the existing Kershope Forest.
-  **Thriving habitats for wildlife:** enhance existing wet woodland habitats and create new wildlife habitats connecting into Kershope Forest.
-  **Benefits for the wider landscape:** capture carbon, help to reduce soil erosion and flooding, and improve the soil and air quality.
-  **Future forest resources and resilience:** plant a mix of trees for a lasting supply of sustainable timber.

## Types of woodland we could plant



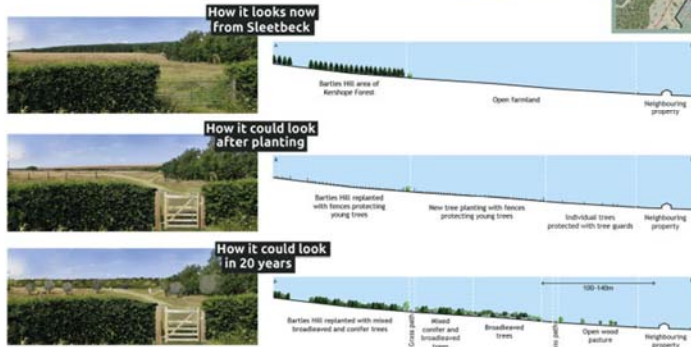
View north west towards Kershope Forest from public right of way



## How the new woodland could look

Our initial designs include proposals to:

- Keep open space closest to Sleetbeck, planting fewer trees. In other areas, the open character would change slowly over time.
- Improve the view by planting a mixture of broadleaved trees in the middle distance with mixed conifer beyond on Bartles Hill. This would increase the variety of species and add colour and texture.
- Replace two farm gates to allow people to walk in the new woodland.

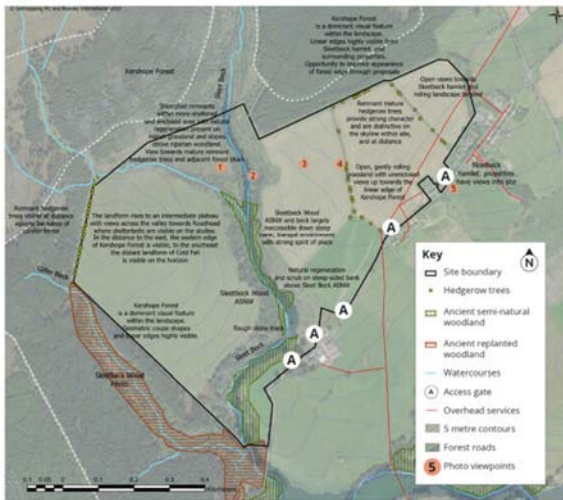


## About the site

The site has open agricultural pasture, classified as grade 4 or 5 (1 being the most productive), and established riparian woodland, some of which is Ancient Semi-Natural Woodland (ASNW); We anticipate that around 40 hectares would provide for new woodland planting. The site would become part of the area we manage as part of the Forestry England's Kershope Forest Plan.



1. Panoramic view east to west from marsh grassland over site overlooking riparian woodland, ASNW sheepfold remains



2. View south into ASNW 3. View east over conifer edge of Kershope Forest and hedgerow field boundary 4. View southeast over Sleetbeck and surrounding landscape



5. View northwest from Sleetbeck hamlet towards Kershope Forest edge



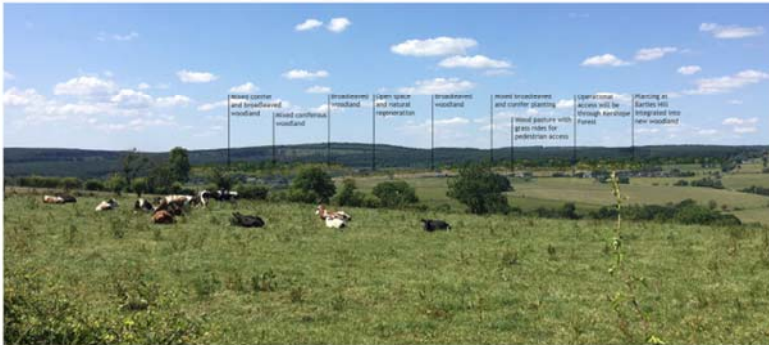
## How the new woodland could look



### Existing Landscape

The view northwest towards Kershope Forest from the public right of way: Kinkry Hill to Clattering Forge.

You can see rolling pasture farmland in the foreground with Sleetbeck hamlet in the middle-distance. You can also see the deciduous Ancient Semi-Natural Woodland in the proposed site, along with remaining hedgerow boundaries. Kershope Forest dominates on the horizon.



### How the new woodland could look

This panoramic view gives an indication of the form of proposed woodland planting. To the southwestern edge are broadleaf trees next to the existing woodland and Sleetbeck ASNW. Beyond the broadleaf trees, we would plan to plant a mixture of conifers up to the boundary with Kershope Forest.

To the southeastern boundary, next to the road and Sleetbeck hamlet, we propose to have wood pasture, planting fewer trees to keep the open character. Beyond this is a mixture of broadleaved woodland, evenly mixed conifer and broadleaved woodland, ending with conifer-dominant woodland.

The Bartles Hill area of Kershope Forest will be felled for its timber and redesigned, with a wider variety of species and an increase in broadleaved trees. The design also includes areas of open space, wide rides, shrubs, and keeps existing streams and wet areas to provide a rich mosaic of habitats, supporting a range of wildlife including birds, insects, and amphibians.



Forestry England





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

## Interactive board at consultation drop in event

**Forestry England**

When thinking about our initial designs for the new woodland and open space, where it is closest to Sleetbeck (outlined on the plan), please indicate your views next to each item below, using a green, amber or red dot (where green is positive, amber is neither positive or negative, and red is negative):



	Planting trees individually
	Grouping trees into clusters to encourage a longer life for the trees, shelter from the weather, and food for wildlife
	Planting fruit trees
	Areas for animals to graze with some tree planting (wood pasture)
	Areas of meadow with some tree planting (wood meadow, managed by mowing)

# Appendix B: Consultation questionnaire

## Print Survey

When this page is printed, items such as navigation links will be hidden, and a simple layout suitable for printing will be used.

The printable layout is suitable for preview and review of surveys.

You may find that surveys do not print perfectly, this is because web browsers don't provide precise control over printing.

### Overview

Forestry England's Woodland Creation Team would like to share with you and invite your comment on our exciting plans for a proposed new woodland near Sleetbeck.

Please see the plans for the woodland in the 'related' documents below.

### Why your views matter

We value your comments and feedback on the plans and hope to see you at our Consultation Event.

### Introduction

Thank you for taking part in this consultation for future woodland near Sleetbeck.

You can submit information without completing the name 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 name?

Name

#### 2 What is your email address?

Email

#### 3 What is your organisation?

Organisation

### Feedback

#### 4 Please use this space to add feedback or questions on the proposed plans

Type your response here (Required)

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

Theme	Positive	Concern	Question	Suggestion	Total
Additional surveys - land lost to food production and cumulative impact on loss of farmland, suitability of land for planting				2	2
Area already densely forested		6			6
Communication and consultation	3	1		1	5
General negative		3			3
General positive comment	7				7
Grazing animals				3	3
Impact on agricultural land, food production and jobs		12			12
Impact on birds and wildlife		13		3	16
Impact on carbon, air quality environment, soil quality, sustainable timber ,wellbeing and diversity	13	7			20
Impact on drainage		5		1	6
Parking and access			1	1	2
Request to include family memorial			1		1
Survey outcome results - carbon savings, presence of peat, species displaced, breeding birds, land lost to food production and cumulative impact on loss of farmland		2	6		8
Traffic and parking		8			8
Tree planting and choice	4	4	3	10	21
Users of the new woodland				2	2
Views		1			1
Woodland access and maintenance	1			0	1
Woodland management, fencing and signage	1	1	1	3	6
Alternative forest location				1	1
Woodland users and trails				4	4
<b>Total</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>63</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>135</b>

## Appendix D: Code frame for sticky comments left at the drop-in event.

	Positive	Concern	Question	Suggestion	Total
Woodland users and trails		2		13	15
Tree planting and choice	1			6	7
Impact on agricultural land, food, production, and jobs		5			5
Impact on birds and wildlife		3		1	4
Impact on drainage		1		2	3
Woodland management, fencing and signage	1	1			2
Parking and access				2	2
Impact on carbon, air quality environment, soil quality, sustainable timber, wellbeing, and diversity		1		1	2
Area already densely forested		2			2
General negative		2			2
Woodland location		1			1
Woodland access and maintenance			1		1
Communication and consultation		1			1
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>47</b>

## Appendix E: Letters/emails announcing the launch of the consultation

Letters/emails were sent to the following stakeholders:

Stakeholder
Local residents
Cumbria Wildlife Trust
Bewcastle Parish Council,
Royal Society of the Protection for Birds (Cumbria)
John Stevenson MP, Member of Parliament for Carlisle
Councillor Tim Pickstone, Local member for Longtown and the Border
Natural England
Confor UK
Environment Agency
Cumberland Council

## Letter to local residents

### **North England Forest District**

Eals Burn  
Bellingham  
Hexham  
Northumberland  
NE48 2HP

[forestryengland.uk](https://www.forestryengland.uk)

Forest Management Director  
Kevin May

17 October 2023

Dear resident

I am writing to inform you that Forestry England has recently purchased land close to your property for the purposes of new woodland creation.

Forestry England manages and cares for the nation's 1,500 woods and forests. As England's largest land manager, we shape landscapes and enhance forests for people to enjoy, wildlife to flourish and businesses to grow. Sleetbeck Wood will be one of many new woodlands Forestry England is planting which support Government targets to increase tree planting across the UK.

The new woodland will be a 'Coronation Wood' to celebrate the Coronation of His Majesty King Charles III. The woodland will cover up to 63 hectares and join up with Kershope Forest, which Forestry England already manages.

Planning and planting a brand-new woodland are an exciting moment and we're currently doing the detailed work of deciding the right mix of tree species which will flourish in the soil and climate conditions here. We're looking carefully at the many different benefits this woodland will bring in the decades ahead including how Sleetbeck Wood can boost biodiversity and help nature recovery across the wider landscape.

We invite local residents and organisations to look at our proposals, provide feedback and get involved as the woodland plans take shape. Forestry England will share designs for the new woodland at a public consultation drop-in event at **Roadhead Public Hall on 1<sup>st</sup> November 2023 from 4pm to 7pm.**



You can also read the plans and submit your views online at: <https://consult.forestryengland.uk/forest-districts/sleetbeck> until 23:59 on Thursday 9th November 2023. Following this consultation, formal approval will be sought from the Forestry Commission for the new planting scheme.

I attach a map of the property for your information. If you have any questions relating to the new woodland, please contact our project team by emailing: [woodland.creation@forestryengland.uk](mailto:woodland.creation@forestryengland.uk)

Yours sincerely

*Kevin May*

Kevin May  
Forest Management Director (North England)

Example stakeholder letter:

## Letter to Bewcastle Parish Council

The Clerk

**North England Forest District**

Eals Burn

Bellingham

Hexham

Northumberland

NE48 2HP

[forestryengland.uk](https://forestryengland.uk)

Forest Management Director

Kevin May

Bewcastle Parish Council

BY EMAIL: [bewcastlepc.clerk@gmail.com](mailto:bewcastlepc.clerk@gmail.com)

17 October 2023

Dear Clerk

I am writing to inform you that Forestry England has recently purchased land within Bewcastle parish for the purposes of new woodland creation.

Forestry England manages and cares for the nation's 1,500 woods and forests. As England's largest land manager, we shape landscapes and enhance forests for people to enjoy, wildlife to flourish and businesses to grow. Sleetbeck Wood will be one of many new woodlands Forestry England is planting which support Government targets to increase tree planting across the UK.

The new woodland will be a 'Coronation Wood' to celebrate the Coronation of His Majesty King Charles III. The woodland will cover up to 63 hectares adjacent to Sleetbeck road and join up with Kershope Forest, which Forestry England already manages.

Planning and planting a brand-new woodland is an exciting moment and we're currently doing the detailed work of deciding the right mix of tree species which will flourish in the soil and climate conditions here. We're looking carefully at the many different benefits this woodland will bring in the decades ahead including how

Sleetbeck Wood can boost biodiversity and help nature recovery across the wider landscape.

We invite local residents and organisations to look at our proposals, provide feedback and get involved as the woodland plans take shape. We will share designs for the new woodland at a public consultation event at **Roadhead Public Hall on 1<sup>st</sup> November 2023 from 4pm to 7pm.**

You can also read the plans and submit your views online at: <https://consult.forestryengland.uk/forest-districts/sleetbeck> until 23:59 on Thursday 9th November 2023. Following this consultation, formal approval will be sought from the Forestry Commission for the new planting scheme.

I attach a map of the property below for your information. I have also included a poster which could be shared with residents. If you have any questions relating to the new woodland, please contact our project team by emailing: [woodland.creation@forestryengland.uk](mailto:woodland.creation@forestryengland.uk)

Yours sincerely

*Kevin May*

Kevin May  
Forest Management Director (North England)

## Appendix F: Stakeholders

We received responses from the stakeholders listed in the table below. Their comments have been included in the coded summaries.

Facilitator of forgotten lands farmers group

Bewcastle Heritage Group

Cumberland Council

RSPB

Cllr Tim Pickson (longtown ward)

Bewcastle Parish Council

Natural England

Environment Agency