

Forestry Commission
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Sir Christopher Chope OBE MP

Sent via email
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Chairman
Sir William Worsley

11th April 2023

Dear Sir Christopher

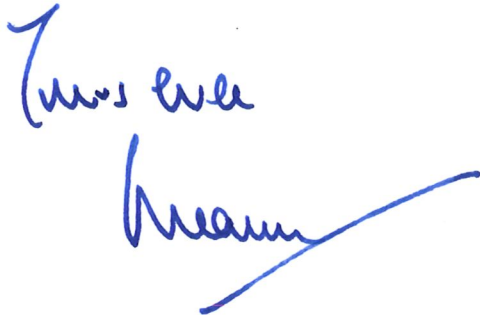
Thank you for the opportunity to present evidence to the Environmental Audit Committee inquiry into Sustainable Timber and Deforestation. I am looking forward to reading the recommendations of the Committee in due course.

I feel that I must write to you and follow up on the exchange we had on tree felling in the New Forest. The Forestry Commission is absolutely committed to increasing the area of woodland cover in England and the volume of timber reaching market. This includes supporting private landowners who want to plant trees and create woodlands and finding new ways for Forestry England to increase tree cover.

As well as planting and managing trees for timber, Forestry England must play its part in habitat restoration and nature recovery. In the past we have got it wrong and planted trees where we shouldn't have. Although heath is a man-made habitat, it is incredibly important for a wide range of reptiles, insect and bird species. In 2013, land managed by Forestry England included 16.8% open habitat and we are committed to increasing this to 21.1% by 2060. This will help ensure we meet international nature conservation commitments that the UK government is signed up to. In parallel, we are looking at a number of opportunities to create new conifer woodlands elsewhere on the estate, and through working with others via lease hold arrangements. This will help compensate for the lost timber production where habitat restoration is the priority and tree cover is removed. In addition, we are making some progress in being able to buy land and increase the size of the estate we hold for the nation. Again, this has the potential to maintain or increase the supply of softwood to market in the long term.

We have a complex set of services to provide the timber processing industry, central government and society. As well as managing the nation's forests for timber and nature we manage for access and recreation. We host 12.5 million days visits to the New Forest each year which help support local businesses and provide us with some income that helps us deliver our multiple outcomes across the estate. Balancing these social, economic and environmental priorities is a challenge we enjoy meeting.

I would very much like to invite you to join me, or one of my team, on a visit to some of our sites in the New Forest so you can see our work at first hand.



Sir William Worsley
Chairman
Forestry Commission